2554

PACIFIC COAST BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL UNION
No.....

lb	oz	$	¢
6	3	2	50
10	0	3	75
1	2		85
1	0		75
17	0	6	37

to 2 [illegible] 1 47½ [illegible] 96
6 00 3 42½
94 5 25

THE NEW

WHOLE DUTY OF MAN,

CONTAINING

THE FAITH AS WELL AS PRACTICE

OF A

CHRISTIAN:

MADE EASY

FOR THE PRESENT AGE.

DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS.

WITH DEVOTIONS

PROPER FOR SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

PUBLISHED

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JAMES QUIN,

1800.

Herman J. Powell.
Nov 29 '99

THE NEW

WHOLE DUTY OF MAN,

CONTAINING

THE FAITH AS WELL AS PRACTICE

OF A

CHRISTIAN:

MADE EASY

FOR THE PRESENT AGE.

V-4

DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

OUR DUTY TOWARDS GOD.
OUR DUTY TOWARDS OUR NEIGHBOUR.
OUR DUTY TOWARDS OURSELVES.

WITH DEVOTIONS

PROPER FOR SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

TRENTON:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JAMES ORAM;

1809.

BERKELEY BAPTIST
DIVINITY SCHOOL
LIBRARY

IT has long been the wonder and the inquiry of the world, Who was the author of the *Whole Duty of Man?* The fund of Literary and Religious knowledge, which it exhibits, could not have been the production of a common character. Tho' committed to the world, without the imposing patronage of the learned or the great, it has, by its own intrinsick worth, established an unperishable fame. Whether retiring modesty, or conscious merit, induced the author to withhold his name, it matters not, as time has fixed its value. Dr. Johnson has assigned some plausible reasons, why the author should have wished to remain unknown. He says, "He may have been a clergyman, and may have thought that his religious counsels would have less weight when known to have come from a man whose profession was Theology.—He may have been a man whose practice was not suitable to his principles; so that his character might injure the effect of his book, which he had written in a season of penitence. Or he may have been a man of rigid self-denial, so that he would take no reward for his pious labours while in this world, but refer it all to a future state.

After so long a concealment, the name of the author, whatever celebrity might have attached to it in his life time, cannot now give credit or currency to the work, yet the publisher of this edition takes the liberty to annex to it the Memoir of Lady Pakington, taken from Ballard's British Female Worthies, leaving it with the Reader to form his own opinion from the arguments adduced, whether this work may be attributed to her.

MEMOIR.

DOROTHY, LADY PAKINGTON, wife to sir John Pakington, bart. and daughter of Thomas lord Coventry, keeper of the great-seal, was born in London, about the middle of the reign of James I. This lady, distinguished for her virtues and talents, is the reputed author of "The Whole Duty of Man." Of the circumstances of her private life, except as connected with

8427

the evidence for this opinion, we have little account. "The Whole Duty of Man" has been attributed to four different persons beside Lady Pakington.

To Mr. Abraham Woodhead, of whom it is sufficient to observe, that he lived and died a zealous Roman catholic. To Mr. William Fulman, a learned clergyman of Penshurst in Kent, who died June 28th, 1688. In 1684, bishop Fell, in a preface to the folio edition of "The Works of the Author of The Whole Duty of Man," observes, "that if God had given longer life to this eminent person, the world would have been benefited by a new work, a treatise designed and promised, "On the Government of the Thoughts." Mr. Fulman survived the date of this publication four years.

The third person to whom this celebrated production has been attributed, was Dr. Richard Sterne, archbishop of York. It is observed by Mr. Darke, his biographer, that the archbishop was suspected of being the author of "The Whole Duty of Man." This suspicion seems to have been ill founded. The archbishop owned himself the writer of a book "On Logic," and "A comment on the 103d Psalm;" why then should he affect concealment respecting a work of great merit and celebrity? To this supposition there are also some chronological objections; when the treatise "On the Government of the Thoughts" was promised to the public, the archbishop had attained the advanced age of 87. "The Whole Duty of Man" likewise differs in its style and orthography from the writings of the archbishop. The fourth reputed author of the work in dispute was archbishop Frewen. In objection to this, among other reasons, it is remarked, that in a preface to "The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety," a production allowed to be written by the author of "The Whole Duty of Man," mention is made of the plague and fire of London, whence it appears that the writer was living at the latter end of the year 1666, whereas archbishop Frewen died in 1664.

By the adversaries of lady Pakington it is objected, that the learning displayed in "The Whole Duty of Man" can scarcely be attributable to a woman. "A

learned man has observed to me in a letter," says Ballard, "that 'The Whole Duty of Man' could not have been the production of a woman, from the great variation of style, and different manner of treating the subjects which it contains; besides the many quotations from Hebrew writers, with which every page abounds. In the Christian's Birth-right, through which a close thread of logical reasoning runs, the language is particularly exalted. Both the arguments and diction of this work are such as the profoundest scholars would use." In reply to this, it may be recollected that, during the age of Elizabeth and James, it was the fashion to give to women a learned education; that the study of the languages, and even of the abstrue sciences, was the occupation of the most illustrious ladies of the court; and that in no period were there more numerous examples of female excellence and worth. Of the endowments and erudition of lady Pakington there are also various testimonies. Dr. George Hicks, a man of known probity, and intimate with the family, thus speaks of this lady in a preface to his "Anglo Saxon, and Mæso-Gothic Grammars," printed before his "Thesarus," and inscribed to sir John Pakington, the descendant of lady Pakington: "Your grandmother, the daughter of Thomas lord Coventry, &c. was illustrious for every virtue, more especially such as consist in the practice of a christian life. She had moreover an excellent judgment, and a talent of speaking correctly, pertinently, clearly, and gracefully: in which she was so accomplished, particularly in an evenness of style and consistent manner of writing that she deserved to be called and reputed the author of a book concerning the duty of man, published anonymously, and well known through the christian world for its extraordinary completeness. Hammond, Morley, Fell, and Thomas, those eminently learned men, averred that she was as great an adept in the Scriptures as themselves, and as well versed in divinity, and in all those weighty and useful notions relating to DUTY, which had been recommended and handed down to us either by profane or christian philosophers. "She was also far from being unacquainted with the antiquities of her own country,

that she knew almost as much as the greatest proficients in that kind of knowledge. Nor is this to be wondered at; since she had in her youth the most excellently learned sir Norton Knatchbull for her tutor and preceptor; and, after she was married, the famous Hammond and others, his contemporaries, very celebrated men, for her companions and instructors."

It was declared by a lady, not long deceased, that Dr. Hickes had assured her, he had himself seen "The Whole Duty of Man" in manuscript, written in the hand of lady Pakington, with many erasures, alterations, and interlineations. Various passages in the work itself afford a presumption of the sex of the writer, who contends for the intellectual privileges of women and the equality of the sexes. The following are the direct evidences in favour of this opinion.

By the author of the "Baronettage," lady Pakington is spoken of as a bright example to her age, and one of the most learned and accomplished of her sex. "Her letters," says he, "and other discourses, still remaining in the hands of her family and friends, are an admirable proof of her genius and capacity. She had the reputation of being the writer of 'The Whole Duty of Man,' the truth of which none who knew her, or were competent judges of her abilities, would call in question. Though her modesty would not suffer her to claim the honour, yet as the manuscript, in her handwriting, now remains with the family, there is scarcely room for doubt. By her virtues and attainments she acquired the esteem of all our learned divines, who confessed themselves edified by her conversation, and instructed by her writings. These gentlemen never failed of an agreeable retreat and sanctuary at Westwood as far as those dangerous times would permit. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of this lady and her husband, that Dr. Hammond found in their family a comfortable subsistence for several years, and at last reposed his bones in their burial-place at Hampton-Lovett, in a chapel built by sir Thomas Packington, in 1561."

Farther proofs respecting the subject in dispute may be found in "A Letter from a clergyman in the country, to a dignified Clergyman in London; vindicating

the Bill brought the last Session of Parliament, for preventing the Translation of Bishops;" printed in London, 1702. The writer in this letter, after an eulogium on the ancestors of sir John Pakington, adds, "but his grandfather's spending 40,000*l.* and being tried for his life during the late civil wars, because he vigorously endeavoured to prevent the martyrdom of king Charles I. and the destruction of episcopacy: the uninterrupted correspondence of his grandmother with the learned and pious Dr. Morley, bishop of Winton, and Dr. Hammond, and who is, by several eminent men (archbishop Dolben, bishop Fell, and Dr. Abbestry, declared this of their own knowledge after her death, which she obliged them to keep private during her life) allowed to be the author of the best and most masculine religious book extant in the English tongue, called 'The Whole Duty of Man;' will serve instead of a heap of instances to show how great regards this family have formerly paid to the church and regular government."

A transcript is also given by Ballard, from a paper said to be in the possession of Dr. Snape, provost of King's-college, Cambridge, in which is the following attestation: "October 19th, 1698, Mr. Thomas Caulton, vicar of Worksop in Nottinghamshire, declared on his death-bed, in the presence of William Thornton, esq. and his lady, Mrs. Heathcote, Mrs. Ash, Mrs. Caulton, and others, as follows: viz. 'On the 5th of November, 1689, at Shire-Oaks, Mrs. Eyre took me up into her chamber after dinner, and told me that her daughter Moyser of Beverly was dead. Afterwards, among other private affairs of the family, she told me who was the author of The Whole Duty of Man; at the same time pulling out of a private drawer a manuscript tied together, and stitched in octavo, which she declared was the original, written by lady Pakington, her mother, who disowned ever having written the other books attributed to the same author, excepting The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety. She added that the manuscript had been perused by Dr. Colvil, master of Trinity college, Cambridge; Dr. Stamford, prebend of York; and Mr. Binks, rector of the great church of Hull."

By lady Pakington's disowning the works attributed to her, it seems merely to be implied, that she did not directly avow or claim them. "The Whole Duty of Man," was published by bishop Fell, with other treatises, as declaredly the production of the same author. Having thus stated the evidence on this subject, the decision must be left with the reader. The underwritten is a catalogue of the works attributed to the author of "The Whole Duty of Man," which was first printed in 1657, and translated into the Latin by Dr. Richard Lucas, and into Welsh by Dr. William Bell.

"The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety, or an impartial Survey of the Ruins of the Christian Religion undermined by unchristian Practices," London, 1725.

"The Gentleman's Calling," London, 1725.

"The Lady's Calling, in two parts," London, 1725.

"The Government of the Tongue," London, 1725.

"The Art of Contentment," London, 1725.

"The lively Oracles given to us, or the Christian's Birthright and Duty in the Custody and Use of the Holy Scriptures," London, 1725.

"A Prayer for King Charles II. in his banishment," and a "Prayer for Resignation," are given by Ballard, copied by a lady from a manuscript of Lady Pakington's at Westwood. She had, some time before her death, been engaged in a work entitled "The Government of the Thoughts," which was mentioned by Dr. Fell in high terms, but never finished. The following eulogium is given by Dr. Fell to the writer of these treatises: She was wise, humble, temperate, chaste, patient, charitable, and devout; she lived a whole age of great austerities, and maintained in the midst of them an undisturbed serenity."

Lady Pakington died May 10th, 1679, and was interred in the church at Hampton-Lovett in Worcestershire; a memorial of her is inscribed at the bottom of a monument erected to her husband. Sir John Pakington expended the greater part of his fortune in the service of king Charles I. in adhering to whose cause he was tried for his life.

SUBSCRIBERS NAMES

TO THE

NEW WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

NEW-JERSEY.

Trenton.

Rev. James F. Armstrong
John Anderson,
Thomas Atkinson,
William Austin,
Governor Bloomfield, 2 cop.
Asa Belden,
Benjamin Bryant,
Jacob Brown,
Alexander Colhoun,
Benjamin Coles,
Abraham Cramer,
George Dill,
Nicholas Dubois,
Joseph Davis,
Samuel Dickinson,
Rebecca Frazer,
Asa Fish,
Israel Fish,
Joseph Giles,
William E. Green,
Joseph B. Green,
William Garwood,
Jacob Herbert,
Dr. John Howell,
Daniel L. Hillman,
Obadiah Howell,
Benjamin Hart,
Ezekiel Howell,
Phebe Howell,
Samuel Howell,
Joseph Hoff,
John Harding,
Richard Hunt,
John L. Hoppock,
Joseph Justice,
Benjamin Jones,
Obadiah Jones,
Absalom Krewson,

Trenton.

Isaac R. Krewson,
Hezekiah Laning,
Robert M'Neely,
John Morris,
Aaron Moore,
John Moore,
William Megronicle,
Samuel T. Machett,
Robert M'Masters,
John Moore,
Joshua Newbold,
Elizabeth Oram,
Sarah Oram,
Mary Oram,
Susannah Oram,
Charlotte Ann Oram,
James Dempsey Oram,
Amelia Oram,
Harriet Oram,
Daniel Phillips,
William Phillips,
Christopher Probasco,
Jonathan Rhea,
Thomas Ryall,
George Ryall,
Andrew Reeder,
John Reeder,
Amos Reeder,
David Robinson,
Elijah Slack,
John Scudder,
John Titus,
Jesse Titus,
Nathaniel Tindall,
William Torhoon,
Israel Taylor,
John Vanhorn,
Rev. Henry Waddell,

NEW-JERSEY.

Trenton.

James J. Wilson,
Ogden Woodruff,
Garret D. Wall,
Gideon H. Wells,
Dr. Jeremiah Woolsey,
Archibald W. Yard.

Nottingham.

Thomas Butcher,
John Beatty,
Silvanus Cook,
Arthur Currie,
William I. Cubberly,
Abior Dawson,
Daniel Fenton, 30 cop.
Theophilus Furman,
Amos Hutchinson, jun.
Richard Hughes,
Benjamin Hayden.
Benjamin Hutchinson,
Joseph Hughes,
Jesse Hutchinson,
Samuel Lenox,
William Lanning,
Mathias Mount,
John Morton,
John Norton,
Mary Pearson,
William Reid,
Elijah Stout,
Mary Scott,
Thomas Tantum,
Thomas Wimer, jun.

Maidenhead.

Joseph Brearly,
Rev. Isaac V. Brown,
William Hutchinson,
Joseph Ivins,
Ralph Phillips,
John Reed,
Jasper Smith, esq.
Benjamin Titus,
James White.

Hopewell.

Richard Aiken,
John Burroughs,
Edmund Burroughs,
Daniel Blackwell,
Titus Burroughs,
Daniel Cook,
John Curry,
Nathaniel Gray,
Stephen Hunt,
Benjamin Hoff,
Benjamin Hill,
Levi Ketcham,
Richard Ketcham,
Levi Knowles, esq.
Joseph Moore,
Benjamin Price,
Roderick Stout,
Jonathan Smith,
Ira Stout,
Abraham Stout,
Enos Titus,
Phillips Van Cleve,
Joseph Van Cleve,
Isaac Wyckoff,
Ephraim Woolsey,
Edward Yard.

Amwell.

Joseph Abbott,
David Bishop, sen.
Elizabeth Brittain,
Jacob Fisher,
William Harts,
Josiah Holcombe,
Joseph Higgins,
John Jewell, sen.
William Lanning,
Solomon Landis,
Samuel Landis,
Joseph Lambert,
John Lambert, jun.
Nathan Price,
Isaac Prall, sen.
Tunis Quick, jun.
John Sarvis,
George Snook,
Mathew Tompson,
William Young,
William Young, weaver,
Israel Wilson,
William Wills.

NEW-JERSEY.

New-Market.

Richard Reed,

Coryell's Ferry.

Emly Holcombe.

Alexandria.

Garrit Bodine,
David Everite,
Rev William B Sloan,
Samuel Runk.

Kingwood.

Samuel Grant,
James Hyde,
Thomas Lequier,
William Probasco,
John Runyan,
David Teumy,
Daniel Wert.

Bethlehem.

Jacob C. Melick,
William Vanfleet.

Readington.

William Apgar,
Caspar Bergen,
John Cooper,
Edward Dally,
Derick Demott,
Aaron Kline,
Cornelius Lane,
Aaron Lane,
Sarah Morehead,
Henry B. Mendham.
Peter Quick,
Adrian Stryker,
William Spader,
Peter Schaamp,
Peter Tenbrook,
Cornelius Ten Eyck,
Hendrick D. Vroom.
John Wyckoff,
Charity Wheaton.

Princeton.

Churchill Houston,
Rev. Wm. C. Schenck.

Greenwich.

George M. Albright,
Nicholas Bailey,
George Crevelling,
Jacob Sharks.

Montgomery.

Ezekiel Blue,
Abraham Davis,
Jedediah Stout,
Abraham Skillman,
Christopher Van Pelt,
Alexander Van Pelt.
Garrett Van Pelt,
Peter Wilson,
William Whitlocke.

Hillsboro'.

Benjamin Beekman,
Peter B. Dumont,
Joseph D. Hageman,
Albert Hoagland,
Henry I. Middlesworth.
Abraham Spader,
John I. Schenck,
Willet Taylor,
Peter D. Vroom.

Somerville.

Dr. Samuel Swan.

Bernards.

Oliver Stelle,
John Voorheis.

Rocky-Hill.

Samuel Beekman,

Sowerland.

Cornelius Cruser.

Hillsborough.

John Frelinghuysen,

Franklin.

Elbert Dumont.

Warren,

Francis Dunn.

Bedminster.

Abraham I. Vanarsdale.

Millstone.

Frederick Frelinghuysen.

NEW-JERSEY.

New-Brunswick.

J. R. Hardenbergh.

West-Windsor.

Thomas Evernham,
James R. Freeman,
Jonathan D. Hutchinson,
William Hulls, jun.
William Post,
William S. Tindall.
William Jewell,

East-Windsor.

Thomas Ford,
Jacob Hight,
James Reid,
John Silvers,
John Savidge,
John Vankirk,
Sylvester Vanderveer,
Joseph Wall,
Jacob Wright.

Bridgwater.

Daniel Ammerman,
John Brokaw,
John Bayles,
John Bogart, junr.
Ephraim Bush,
Stephen Boyer,
Isaac Cubberly,
Isaac Cooper,
Joseph Doty,
William Howell,
C. W. Hunter,
Richard T. Hall,
Samuel W. Hall,
Henry Marshall,
Dickinson Miller,
George M'Donald,
Roeleef Nevius,
John Reed,
Samuel Swan,
Rev. Peter Studdiford,
John Smith, jun.
G. Wm. Tunison,
Andrew A. Ten Eyck,
Jacob Vroom,
Tunis Van Derveer,
Luke Vosseller,
F. Van Derveer,
H. Vanartsdalen.

Somerset.

John Atkinson,
Nicholas Dubois.
Rev. William R. Smith,
Gilbert B. Taylor,
Abraham Ten Eyck,
Sarah Van Doren, widow
Nicholas Williamson.

Spottswood.

W. Betts,
James Clark,
Daniel Dill,
Daniel H. Disborough,
John L. Johnston,
Heathcote Johnston,
Peter Jobes,
Cornelius Johnson,
John Marston,
David Mercereau,
Matthias Prest,
John Perrine,
James Rue,
William Throckmorton.
William Warne.

Elizabeth-Town.

William Halsted.

Farmington.

David Belden.

Allentown.

Nathaniel Foster,
Robert Montgomery,
Isaac Thorn.

Hightstown.

John Hulick.

Chesterfield.

William Nutt.

Springfield, B. C.

Charles Holme.

NEW-JERSEY.

Mansfield.

Samuel Tantum.

Blaumberrough.

Albert Sutphen,
Arthur Sutphen.

Recklesstown.

Robert Halloway,
Joseph Hall,
John Middleton,
Joseph Middleton,
Israel Mitton, 2 copies.
Henry Read,
Ann Reckless.

Pennington.

Thomas Coats.

Hanover.

Asa Branson.

Union-Forge, B. C.

Wm. B. Cooke,

PENNSYLVANIA.

Northampton.

Mary Barkley,
Wilhelmus Carson,
Mary Cornell,
James Cornell,
Adrian Cornell,
John Cornell, sen.
James Corson,
Benjamin Corson,
Cornelius Corson,
Giles Cravan,
Abigail Dubois,
Joseph Fenton,
David Feaster,
Joseph Finney,
John Finney,
John Finney,
Aaron Feaster,
John Feaster,
Henry Feaster,
Jacob Harding,
Alexander Haslet,
John Lefferts,
Leffert Lefferts,
Arthur Lefferts,
Peter Lefferts,
George Logan,
Sylvanus M'Kinney,
James Oram,
William Palmer,
Joshua Praul,
John Thompson,
Jacob Thomas,
David Vanhorn,
Christopher Vanartsdalen,
Garrit Vanartsdalen,
Gerardus Wynkoop,
David Wynkoop.

Southampton.

Alexander Bodle,
Joseph Crispin,
Gilliam Cornell, jun.
Gilliam Cornell,
Joseph Clayton,
Jonathan Clayton, jun.
John Ewing,
Isaac Harding,
Dirick Hogeland,
Daniel Hogeland,
Capt. John Kruson,
Aaron Knight,
Abraham Lefferts,
John Lefferts,
Peter Paddock,
Benjamin Rymer,
James Roberts,
William Stoneman,
Abraham Stevens,
Lot Search,
Joseph Tomlinson,

PENNSYLVANIA.

Eneas Tomlinson,
Alice Vanartsdalen.

Moreland.

Amos Addis
Eupheme Banes
John Corson,
John Clayton,
Jonathan Clayton,
Abraham Clayton,
Casper Felter,
George Hogeland,
Derick Hogeland,
Rynear Lukens,
Christian Snyder,
Michael Stevens,
Cornelius Wynkoop,
Catharine Wynkoop,
Garret Wynkoop,
Philip Wynkoop,
Abraham Wynkoop,
Jacob Yerkes,
Robert Yerks.

Lower Moreland.

William Ayres,
Isaac Beans,
David Bower,
Samuel W. Comly,
William Collady,
Nathan Delany,
George Felter,
Isaac Hawkins,
John Habensack,
William Jeanes,
Jonathan King,
Thomas Langstroth,
Israel Michener,
James Paul,
John Rutherford,
William Roberts,
Peter Sauerman,
John Vanhorn,
Nathan Yerkes,
Isaac Yerkes,
Harman Yerks,

Walsingham.

David Willett.

Newton.

William Abbertson.
William Coale,
William Hart,
Js. Hicks,
Jesse Leedom,
Sarah Linton, junr.
Joseph Longshore,
Francis Murray.
John Plumly,
Hugh Ross,
Samuel Roberts, junr.
John Scott,
James Thompson,
William Watts.

Solebury.

Thomas Broadhurst,
Joseph Carver,
Joseph Eastburn,
Moses Ely,
Jonathan Ely,
John Johnson,
Joseph Kugler,
Samuel Kinsey,
James Pearson,
George Praster,
Thomas Philips,
Reuben Pownall,
Isaac Pickering,
Mahlon Paxson,
James Slack,
Hugh Smith,
Joseph Smith.

Warminster.

Isaac Addis,
Isaac Bennett,
Thomas Coughlin,
Robert Lewis,
James M'Coy,
Abraham M'Dowell,
Harman Van Zant,
Charles Vansant.

Norristown.

Nathaniel Koplin,
Justus Tcheetz.

PENNSYLVANIA.

Buckingham.

Joseph Carver,
John Connard,
John Gillingham, junr.
Philip Gile,
William Large,
And. Ruckman,
Benjamin Roberts,
Everard Roberts,
Cyrus Smith,
Elisha Wilkinson.

Lower-Makefield.

William Buckman,
John Depuy,
Elijah Leedom,
Joseph Lovett,
Robert Margerum,
Abraham Slack,
Cornelius Slack, sen.

Upper-Makefield.

Matthew Beans,
Archibald Graham,
Henry Hough,
William Tomlinson,
Michael Vanhart.

Falsington.

William Cox,
Samuel Echard,
Benjamin Hamilton,
John Rockhill,
David Swain.

Bensalem.

H. Benezet,
James Roberts,
Joseph Thompson.

Middletown.

William Flowers,
Isaac Randall,
Joshua Vanhovan,

Wrights-Town.

Cornelius Dungan,
James Johnson,
Joseph Johnson.

Hatborough.

Michael Fetter,
Benjamin Gilbert,
Abraham Haslet,
Charles Johnson,
Phebe Jones, widow,
Casper Kizar,
Catharine Watkins.

Horsham.

Wm. M^{c} Clean
George Stuts,
Jeremiah Walton.

Yardleyville.

Andrew Black,
William Everite,
John Everite.
William Reeder,
James Sapers.

Warwick.

Elias Anderson,
John Hough,
Morgan Meredith,
Jacob Overholt,
William Ramsay.

New-Hope.

William Crook,
Eli Doan,
Amasa Ely,
Daniel Parry,
Benjamin Parry,
Joshua Vansant,
Thomas Walton.

Doylestown.

Andrew Dennison,
Hugh Meredith.

Bristol.

Ira Comfort,
John M^{c}Mullin,
Aaron Wright.

Abbington.

Jeremiah Berrell,
Agnes Roberts,
Samuel Roberts.

PENNSYLVANIA.

Upper-Dublin.

Baltzer Earnest,
John Gilbert,
Samuel M'Nair, junr.

Lower-Dublin.

John Blake, junr.

Dolington.

Stephen Field.

Upper-Makefield.

Isaac Caulton.

White-Marsh.

Everard Batton, jun.
Nathan Lewis.

New-Brittian.

Robert Shewell.

Plymouth.

John Egbert,
Jasper Hallowell.

Tinicum.

Joseph Heany.

Frankfort.

G. Caster.

Attleborough.

Daniel Carpenter.

Morrisville.

Timothy P. Leary.

Milford.

Joshua C. Canby.

NEW-YORK.

New-York.

John Ball,
Evert Duyckinck, 12 copies.
George Forman,
Rev. Thomas Y. How,
Charles Ludlow,
Isaac G. Ogden,
John Purdy,
Lewis Randolph,
James Swords,
Garret Van Horn,
John Watts.

Contents.

Abraham's offering Isaac *page* 295
Accident 110
Actions, to be well considered 391 & seq.
Admonition due to a wife 271
to a friend 274, 345
to a servant 284
how to be given 343
Adoration of God 201
Advice to such as have been sick 397
Advantages, worldly 38
Adulteration of goods, sinful 312
Adultery 302, 412
Advocate 140
Affairs, how to be settled 467
Affections of a husband 266
Affirmations of God 57
Afflictions rendered tolerable 70 109
Agony, *see* Christ's sufferings.
Almighty God 107
Almsgiving 349
as it respects God 350
our neigbour 351
ourselves 352
motives thereto 350
how to be distributed 353, &c. &c.
in what proportion 357
does not impoverish ib.
its reward 359
Ambition, what, and how curbed 396
Amendment of life 185
Angels 122, 138
's message 122
's salutation of Mary ib.
Anger 343
Annihilation 164
Annunciation, *see* Angel's message.
Anxiety condemned 73
Anxiety, how cured 395
Apparel, how to be chosen 264
its lawful use 440
its ends ib. &c.
its excess sinful ib.
Appetites 456
Apostles Creed 98
their veracity, 115, 136
Articles of the christian faith 98
Artificers, *see* Idleness.
Ascension of Christ, *see* Jesus.
Assistance due to a friend 274
Atheism, its folly and miseries 164, 176
Atheists, the case of 169
Attention, necessary in prayer 239
Attributes of God 63, 107, 109
Backbiters condemned by God 320
Bad company 276, 372
money 313
securities 305
Baptism, its benefits 95
why necessary to salvation ib.
its vows 97
of unbaptized persons 95
their obligation 99
Bargaining, *see* Traffick.
Beauty 385
Behaviour at church 93
at meals 207
Belief in one God and three persons 101 &c.
one God Almighty 107
the Father 106
Son 105
Holy Ghost 105, 150
Belief, *see* Faith.
Benefactors 335
Birth of Christ, *see* Christ.
Blasphemy 193
Blemishes, natural 338
Blessedness, *see* Happiness.

Boasting 379
Bodily worship 115
Body of man 33, 38
our great kindness to it 38
is mortal 33, 38, 336
has no certain happiness in this world 38
its corrupt state 39
see Resurrection.
Boldness 377, 378
Bonds not discharging, sinful 306
Bonds-men insolvent 305
Book, the intention of this 451
Bounty to the poor 349
Brawling 383
Breach of trust, *see* Trust, and 309
Breakings fraudulent 305
Brethren, the duty of 257
who so accounted 259
natural, how to be loved ib.
spiritual, how to be loved ib.
see Friendship.
Burial of Christ, *see* Jesus:
Christian 135
Business, worldly 191
Busy-bodies 364
Buying and selling 210, 427

Calumny 324
Cards 437
Care of the soul, the necessity thereof 33
motives thereto 42
will not be in vain 47
is in man's power 48
of the body 39
Cares 395
Catechising, its usefulness 91
a duty on parents, &c. ib.
Cautions about recreations 436
in religious matters ib.
Censoriousness 320
how cast out 307 *see* Reports.
Challenging 289
Chance, what it is 110
Charity or beneficence 337, 387
the badge of a christian 337
in the affections ib.
Charity to the souls, bodies, and goods of men commanded 331
its good effects 338, 342 350
to our enemies 368, 340
is a pleasant duty 342
suppresses all malice, &c 343
in our actions ib.
is to comfort him 344
relieve and admonish 345
in sickness and imprisonment 346
under persecution for religion 347
in respect of goods 348
credit 361
its great rules ib.
how interrupted 359
how to be procured 360
Chastity 411
in what it consisteth ib.
helps to it 415
Chearfulness recommended 438
Cheating 307
Children, when capable of sinning. 245
Christ, of faith in him 115
was a prophet, a priest, and king 116
how this faith should influence our lives ib.
why called our Lord ib.
objections against his being God and man answered 116, 122
must be believed 121
is foretold by the angel 122
his conception 124
birth 124
lineage, mother, place of birth 125
published by angels ib.
worshipped by shepherds ib.
advantages of his birth 126
his sufferings and crucifixion 127, 189
was tormented in his human soul 127
the cause and benefit of his sufferings 127, 189

Christ, the use and benefit of this faith 130
his death 131
how he draws us to himself 132
his precepts ib.
his example ib.
his grace 134
our duty to him ib.
his burial ib.
what to be learned from it 135
his resurrection ib.
its veracity proved 136
necessary for mankind 138
why he appeared only to his disciples ib.
his ascension into heaven 139
why in the sight of his disciples only 140
his mediatorial office in heaven 140, 214
its benefit to mankind ib.
will come to judge all mankind 142
and angels 144
in what manner he will judge mankind 145
Christian duties possible 99
Christianity, no imposture 118
not affected by the bad lives of some christians 174
Church, how to be reverenced 79
behaviour therein 80
Catholick, of whom composed 155
is universal, holy, and cannot fail ib.
is a state of salvation 156
Civility 330
Civil magistrate, *see* Magistrate.
Comforts of religion 178
Coming of Christ to judgment 142
Commandments of God 57
how to be kept 97
what they contain 226
Communion holy, *see* Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Communion of Saints 151 *See* Church Catholick.
Company how to be chosen 276
its importance ib.
bad to be avoided ib.
Compassion, *see* Charity.
Complaints against God, unreasonable 70, 74
Conceit, *see* self-conceit.
Conception of the Virgin Mary 123
Condemned prisoners 350
Conditions of prayer 312
Confession, its duty and parts 185, 202
Conscience, its sting 314
its light and sensibility 170
Consideration 391, 393
its influence 392
danger of omitting it 393
about marriage 272
Constancy in friendship 274
Contempt of the world 463
clergy 237
Contention, dangerous 76, 365
Contentment in our station 395
its good effect 398
helps to it 400
no real satisfaction without it 258, 401
Contrition, what 186
Conversation, rules for good 276
Correction, when necessary 243
imprudent, forbidden ib.
Corrections of God
Covenant, first, its nature 56
second, its conditions 11
sealed in the Lord's supper 189
Covetousness, what, and how cured 398
contrary to our duty 399
Counterfeits 305
Courage, *see* Duelling.
Courtesy 333
Creation of the world 168
Credit or reputation, its value 317
to injure it, sinful 318
demands reparation 329
See Charity.
Creditor 305, 337, 351
when unmerciful 348

Credulity 382
Creed, the 98
Criminals murdering themselves 301
Cruelty, its sin 295
whence it ariseth ib.
Crucifixion, *see* Christ
Cursing 193, 198
no temptation to it ib.
admits of no excuse 199
must be avoided ib.
what leads thereto 334
Customs, paying 229
DAY, *see* Lord's Day, Feasts, Fasts.
Days, our, how to be numbered 460
Dealing, *see* Traffic, Deceit, and Fair-dealing.
Death, what it is 454
is common and near to all, though uncertain 455
its time not decreed by God ib.
why dreadful to human nature. 477
it fear, how removed 478
advantageous to men 455
how made terrible 479
why young men ought to prepare for it 456
why old men should be content to die 453
preparation for it 460, 471 476
Death of Christ, *see* Christ.
the righteous, what 470
Death-bed, *see* Repentance.
Debauchery 411, 412
Debtor insolvent 348, 353
Debts contracted fraudulently ib.
Dissimulation 306
Debts prosecuted for 348
by security must be paid 306
by promise must be paid 307
Deceit in trust, what 309
in traffic and bargaining 310,
is too frequent practice 311
Decrees, *see* Melancholy
Defacing 298
Defamation, *see* Detraction.
Defrauding creditors 305
the public 307
Delaying repentance, dangerous 483
Denial, *see* Self-denial.
Deprecation 203
of sin, and of punishment ib.
Deriding 338
Despair of God's mercy 60
when the effect melancholy, or of our sins 60
its remedy 61
Detraction, *see* Censoriousness, Evil speaking, false reports, lying, slander
means to prevent it 319
Devil, who 97
his works, what ib.
his power over us 410
Devotions, *see*, Prayer, and Duty of Man.
Dice 437
Diligence or perseverance in virtue 404
see Industry.
Directions for reading the scripture, *see* Help.
Disappointments 446
Discontent 394, 400
Discretion in thinking 373
Diseases or distempers 446
Dishonesty 278
Disinheriting a child 254, 467
Dismembering 293
Disproportion of offences 343
Disputes, religious 175
Disquiet of conscience 314
Dissimmulation
Distractions in prayer 214
Diversions 435
Divine Revelation, *see* Revelation.
Divinity of the Son of God 115 124
Holy Ghost 106, 111, 150
Doctrine, *see* Divine Revelation.
Dress, when blamable 265, 440
See Apparel, Fashions.
Drinking, its ends considered 422
its false ends described and their danger 424, 426

Drinking of spiritous liquors 427
degrees of this sin 430
its guilt and mischief 431
the necessity and difficulty of forsaking it 432
how avoided 433
admits of no excuse 434
Drunkenness, its danger 424
Temperance.
Duelling is murder 289
Duty (Old) of Man's defects ib.
(New) its intention 454
of Man, its parts 54
to our neighbour 226, 286
civil magistrates 230
ministers or pastors 231
parents 239
children 243
husbands 268
wives 266
brethren 257
relations 356
friends 273
masters 282
servants 277
to those in want, *see* Poor.
parents 245
wives 262
Duty towards God 55

EAting, its ends 419
directions for its use 420
danger of high eating ib.
exhortations against it ib.
Education of children 245
how to be managed 252
Employment 251
Encouragement due to servants 284
Engrossing, sinful 310
Enthusiasm in ourselves 65
in others 408
Envy, a sin, 318
its folly 320
how remedied and cast out 340
Equivocation 332
Estate how to be disposed of 250
Eternity of hell torments 167
Eves-droppers, *see* Tale-bearers.
Evidence must not conceal the truth 324
Evil gotten goods 314
and good, *see* Good and Evil.
Evil-speaking, its sin 320
when lawful 329
to be discouraged 324
Exaltation of Christ 140
Examination before communion 184
its use 185
Example 248
Excellency of God 63
christianity, 103, 118, 173
Excess, *see* Drinking, Intemperance.
Excuse, *see* [illegible].
Extortion condemned 312

FAculties of the soul 34, 40, 287
Faith in God 55, 188
Faith in God's promises 75
threatenings ib.
Jesus Christ, *see* Belief, Rule, &c. 115
Christian, to be believed 98
its benefits 103
necessary in prayer 212
Fair-dealing, the advantages of 311
Faithfulness amongst friends 273
of servants 277
Fall of Adam and Eve 42
False reports 319
witness 324
Family prayer, its duty 206
Fasting, a duty 224
how kept ib.
when acceptable to God ib.
when sinful ib.
cannot satisfy for sin ib.
Fasts of the church, *see* Lent 55, 224
Fate, what it is 110
Father, first Person in the Trinity 105
God the 106 &c.
the benefit of this belief 109
Faults of others, concerning the 322
see Evil-speaking
Fear of God why necessary 16

Fear of men more than God, its folly and danger 68
of death how removed 477
Feasts of the church, how to be kept 85
Felicity, *see* Happiness.
Festivals, *see* Feasts.
Fidelity in a married state 264
in every person 307
Flattery to be avoided 331
Flesh, its lusts to be renounced 98
Fornication 412
Fortitude *see* Patience.
Fortune, *see* Fate and Goods.
Fortune-telling 74
Free-thinking 170
Friendship, its duties
Gaming, its sin and danger 437
Ghost, *see* Holy Ghost.
Gifts of nature 406
of grace 408
not to be neglected 409
Glory, *see* Vain-glory,
in heaven 166
God, duty to is to fear him 66
is to trust in him 70
is to obey him 75
his corrections how to be borne ib.
is to honour him 99
in his house 80
in his ministers 83
how to honour him 80
in his sabbath 85
in his word 89
in his sacraments 95
in his name 193
God is One in substance 105
is Three in person 113. *See* Trinity.
is Almighty 107
made man 124
his justice vindicated 167
must be worshipped 201
the only object of our prayers 215
his presence a check to our thoughts 373
Going to law 243, 367
Golden rule the 362
Good and evil 315
men 165
name 319, &c.
Goods of our neighbour, must not be damaged, hurt, spoiled, &c. 268
stolen, not to be dealt in 313
Goodness of God, *see* Mercy.
Government 226, 238
of the thoughts 369
of the passions 390
of the tongue, *see* Tongue.
Governors, *see* Magistrates.
Grace at meals 207
Graces 180
Gratitude to benefactors 334
Grief 445
Guide, *see* Spiritual.
Happiness temporal 38
eternal 41
Heaven 166
Hatred 319
Health 420, 430
Hearing sermons, *see* Sermons.
Heathens, *see* Unbaptized persons.
Height of christian perfection 481
Hell 165, 172
High-living, dangerous 420
Holy Ghost (God the) 102
his peculiar office 150
how he worketh in us 151
necessity of this belief 152
our duty to him ib,
sin against him 153
Holy Spirit, *see* Holy Ghost.
scripture, rule of our faith 90
how to be read ib.
Honesty 277, &c. &c.
of servants 277
Honour due to God 79
in his house, ministers, word, sacraments, possessions, holy-days, and name 89. *See* God.
Hope in God, a duty 70
on what grounded 72
its use 72

Humiliation 185
Humilty or submission to God, what, 75, 113, 185. *See* Submission.
necessary in prayer 213
to our neighbour, what 374
its necessity 377
destroys pride 383
Husband, adulterous how to be treated 266
is to love his wife 263
to bear with her infirmities 269
to be faithful to her bed 280
to maintain her 270
to instruct and pray for her 271
bad, who to be so accounted 271
Hypocrisy, *see* Truth, Equivocation, Evidence, Flattery, Lying.
IDentity of the body 160
Idleness. See Time, danger of
to servants, &c. 405
brings poverty, &c. 407
cause of drunkenness 407
root of all evil 407, 436
Idolatry 216
Jealousy 261
Jesus, *see* Christ and Faith.
Jesting 332
Jews 136
Illumination of the spirit 150
Image-worship, *see* Idolatry
Immateriality of the soul 35
Immensity of God 101
Immortality of the soul 34
Impatience, its bad effects 445
how overcome ib.
Imployment 432
Imprisonment 347
Inconsideration, its danger 393
Incredulity 380
Industry, its blessings 403
Infidelity 161 &c.
Infirmities 259
Ingratitude to God, what 342
man 334
Injuries, *see* Murder, Fraud, Theft, Persecution.
Injustice, what 302
Injustice is the ruin of the soul 153
malicious 302
covetous 302
Inoffensiveness, *see* Censoriousness, Detraction, Evil-speaking, Scoffing, Whispering.
Insolvent bondsmen 305
Inspiration 101
Instinct of animals 34
Instruction of children, a duty 246
Integrity, *see* Honesty.
Intemperance, *see* Excess.
in drinking 422
Intention, *see* Thought.
of this book 454
Intercession to God 204
of Christ 140, 216
Jokes 332
Judges, *see* Magistrates.
Judgment, rash 320, 340
at the last day 147
in what manner 148
is reasonable 147
committed to Christ 143
concerning what 144
Invisibility of God 55
Invocation, *see* Prayer. 115.
Justice of God vindicated 167 &c.
to our neighbour 286
negative 287
positive 330
KIlling, *see* Murder.
Kindness of God 61
Magistrate, duty to the 61
must be assisted, prayed for, and obeyed 227
duty of a 228
Knowledge of God 55, 101
LAbourers, *see* Idleness.
Language, ill 319
reproachful 321
Last judgment 147
Law, when to go to with a parent 243
suits, vexatious, sinful 306, 367
of prosecuting an offender 347
a debtor ib.
Laws, human 363
Laying wagers 437
Learning 254

Lent-fast, what, when instituted, and how to be observed 88
Lessening the merit of others, sinful 319
Lewdness, how to be avoided 416
Life holy, exhortation thereto 42 463
natural, when taking it away is murder 289
when it may be taken away without sin 296
remarks on its shortness 471
longest, who so accounted ib.
long its disadvantages 473
how to be improved 472
mis-spent, its danger and folly 475
a good, what 476
long, why desired 480
see Eating, Drinking, Time, and Death.
Light of nature 52
Liquors, spirituous, *see* Drinking.
Lives, wicked, *see* disputes or wicked.
Living peaceably, what 336
high, dangerous 420
Looks 319
Lord, *see* Christ.
Lord's day, *see* Sabbath-day.
supper 180
why ordained 182
its obligation ib.
its benefit 180
our duty *before*, *at* and *after* it 183
Loss of friends 448
Losses in business, ib.
Love of God, in what it consisteth 62
motives thereto 65
its effects 66
tokens of sincerity ib.
how distinguished from self-love 66
of his ministers, *see* Ministers.
of parents, *see* Parents.
of brethren, *see* Brethren.
in a married state 260, 265
Love of our neighbour what 336. *See* Charity.
Loving our enemies 341, 368
Lust, its sin, danger, and mischief to soul and body 412
God's judgments against it 413
excludes from heaven 413
how to be avoided 416
Luxury 420
Lyes in trade sinful 313
jocose 333
Lying always sinful 332
its folly 333

Magistrates, duty to the 230
duty of ib.
Maiming, a great crime 293
Malice 340
its bad effects 343
Man how composed 32
his first estate and fall 43
mere moral, who 44
duty of 55
Man, fear of 68
Marriage, the first consideration in it 272
when unlawful ib.
how far the parents should interpose 241
Married state, *see* Subordination.
Martyrs 137
Mary's (the *Virgin*) salutation 122
resignation 122
Masters, duty to 277
servants owe them obedience and faithfulness 278
submission and diligence 278
duty of 279
owe their servants justice 282
admonition 283
good example ib.
use and command them with moderation 284
to encourage them ib.
Meals, grace at 207
Measure, *see* Scripture.
Mediator, betwixt God and man, who 140
Meditation 189
Meekness in a wife, necessary 263
is due to all men 334
a remedy against pride 383

Meekness, Christian, what 387
its advantages 388
how to be obtained 389
Melancholy, *see* Despair, Cheerfulness.
persons that murder themselves 301
prevents the good influence of the spirit 439
Mercy of God 43, 57, 50, 106, 126.
Mercy, *see* Charity,
Merit of works exploded 75
Message of the Angel to Mary 122
Middle state 473
Mind of Christ afflicted 128
Ministers of God how to be reverenced 82, 231, 235
duty to them 231
how to be qualified 234
must not be contemned on account of their bad lives 235
Ministers of God how to behave to bad ones 238
why so often contemned 237
when necessary to advise and assist us 189, 470
Miracles 119
Misfortunes 445
Mocking God, the sin of 193
Modesty, *see* Chastity.
Modesty in dress 264
Money, bad, not to be paid 313
Morality, true 49, 369
Morality of the thoughts 370
Morrow, how to be taken thought for 71, 72
Mortality of the body 33
Mortgages 305
Mortification, *see* Fasting, Merit, Self-denial.
Motions to good 370, &c.
to evil 372
Murder, how many ways committed. 289
in thought and word 290, &c.
the wickedness of this sin 291
punishment that attends it 292
Murder, how strangely it is often discovered 293
the incitements to it ib.
self, is sinful 297
ought to be abhorred 297
is infamous ib.
causes thereof 299
its danger ib.
how to prevent it 300
the case of melancholy persons 301
of condemned prisoners ib.
Murmuring and how cured 395
Mysteries in the scripture 53, 101, 112

NAme of God to be honoured 190
Nature, what it is 110
Nature, *see* Goods of Nature.
Natural Religion 46
Necessity, what it is 110
of a spiritual guide 189, 470,
Necessity of repentance 219
the priesthood 233
relative duties 286
humility 374
Necessities of our nature, but few 410
Neighbour, duty to our 226
New Testament 90
Niggardliness 444
Numbering our days 460
Nursing children 426

OAths Assertory and Promissory 194
when unlawful ib.
lawful ib.
their obligation 195
vain, lead to perjury 196
Obedience to God 75, 187
ministers 232
parents 240
a husband 261
a master or mistress 277
Object of our prayers 215
Offences against God and men 342
Offender, how to prosecute 347
Offices of Christ 115
Office of the Holy Ghost 150

Old Testament not contrary to the New 89, &c.
Omnipotence of God 63
Omnipresence of God 373
Operation of the Holy Spirit 150
Oppression in dealing or traffic 312
Oppresion, what, and God's vengeance against it 315
Original sin 43
Ostentation 386
Parents, duty to 238
must be respected ib.
loved 239
obeyed 240, &c.
helped 244, &c.
when disobeyed 241
duty of 245
are to nurse, baptise, and educate their children 245
to teach them their duty 248
to give them good examples ib.
how to correct them 249
to teach them respect to each parent 250
to provide for their subsistence ib.
in some honest calling 251
of leaving them estates 253
in what proportion ib.
when they may disinherit a child 254
when they may not 255
must pray for them 256
Pains 446
Partaking of other men's sins 273
Particular judgment 47
Passion 388
Passionate people 390
Pastors, *see* Ministers and Priesthood
Patience, christian, what 446
why a duty, and necessary ib.
it must be persevering 442
in sickness 469
Pawns, counterfeit 305
Payments, *see* Debts.
put off 306
Peaceable, how to be 365
Peace-makers qualifications ib.
Peace-making shortens quarrels 367
Peace of mind, *see* Contentment, Meekness, Humility.
Peevishness 380
Pentecost, feast of 150
Peremptoriness, *see* Humility, Meekness, Consideration.
Perfection, Christian 481
its comforts ib.
Perfections of the scriptures, *see* Scriptures, and 103
of God 53
Perjury described 196
its guilt and danger ib.
its punishment 197
Persecution 347
Perseverance, *see* diligence, patience.
Persons unbaptized 95
Persons, Three, *see* Trinity.
Petition to God in prayer 202
for our souls pardon of sins, and for our bodies ib.
Piety, motives thereto 7, 13, 15, 30
its advantages 73
must be pursued 471, 476
Pity, *see* Charity.
Plainness in dealing commended 311
Pleasantness of religion 134, 448
Pleasures, *see* Recreations.
Pomps and vanities 97
Poor, *see* Almsgiving, Charity, Resignation.
Positiveness, *see* Humility.
Poverty 72, 401
Power, *see* Soul, Trust, Devil.
of God 63, 108, 109
Prayer, its office and power 202
its duty and parts 204
public, in church, its duty and benefit 205
in a family 206
at meals 207
private, its duty ib.

Prayer ought to be frequent 208
its necessity ib.
the times of 209
its advantages ib.
ease 211
pleasantness ib.
conditions 212
only object in God 115
power and efficacy ib.
objections answered 218
Preaching, its use 94. *See* Sermons.
Praise and Thanksgiving to God. 205
Preparation for the Lord's Supper, *see* Sacrament.
for death 461
habitual 464
its advantages 465
hindered 466
Presumption against God, what 60
its cure ib.
Pride conquered by charity 340
what it is 379
its danger and folly 80, 384
opposes God 380
draws to other sins 382
provokes divine ib.
betrays to punishment ib.
how to be conquered and avoided 383
Priest-hood is honorable 333
why ordained ib.
appointed by God 234
qualifications for it ib.
its usefulness 235
not to be despised ib.
see Ministers.
Prisoners condemned, *see* Criminals.
Promises of God, *see* Faith, Trust.
man to man 332
Prophecies *of* and *by* Christ 120
Prophet, *see* Christ.
Prosecutions for offences 347
debt 348
Prosperity, *see* Affliction.
Protections to wrong creditors sinful 306
Providence of God 109. *See* Trust in God.
is not partial 397
Prudence 355
Public, robbing or defrauding the 308
Punishments, *see* Corrections.
in the next world 148
God's justice vindicated in regard to the eternal 167, 171
how this ought to influence us 172
Purgatory, no such place 223
Purity, necessary in prayer 115
of body and mind, *see* Chastity.
Purposes, good to be encouraged 371
of amendment 187

QUalifications for the priest-hood 233
Lord's-supper 180
prayer 211
of a servant 277
Quarrels, how abated 365

RAiling 319
Rancour how suppressed 343
Rash judging. *See* Censoriousness.
Rash judgment 319, 340
Reading the scripture, *see* Help.
Reason, *see* Trinity.
Reconciliation, a duty before communion 187
Recreations, when and what allowable 436
cautions to be observed in them ib.
their undue ends 438
Redemption of man, 130, &c.
Refreshment, *see* Recreations.
Regeneration, how obtained 151, 187, 208, &c.
Relations, duty to 356
Relative duties, necessary 286
Religion, Christian, its object 49
natural 52
revealed ib.

Religion, its reasonableness, certainty, and comforts 53, &c. 179
when necessary, and when published 50, 51, *see also* 372
why opposed 50
must be believed 51. *See* Faith, Revelation.
its truth and excellency 118
perfection 173
not affected by the *wicked lives* of its professors 174
arose not from *fear, education* or *state policy* 176
Religious melancholy, *see* Thoughts 301
Remission of sins 157, 172, 219
Remore of conscience 315
Repentance, what 219
whence it ariseth and when it is effectual 220
its qualifications ib.
must not be put off 22, 462, 482
when most necessary 221
on a death-bed dangerous 221, 462
Reports, false, their crime 319. *See* Admonition.
of the dead ib.
uncharitable 321
their bad consequence 321 and 327. *See* Whispering.
Reproaching 324, &c.
Reproof by a parent, when necessary 248
to a bad neighbour 345
how to be given ib.
in case of intemperance 346
Reputation, *see* Credit.
Resignation to God's will 468. *See* Anxieties, Murmuring, Submission to God,
Resentment 388
Resolution 191
Resolutions of obedience 187
Respect due to extraordinary merit 319
to the poor 329
Respect to Magistrates, Ministers, Children, Servants, humility to our neighbour.
Restitution, why necessary 316
how to be made ib.
Resurrection of the *same* body 159
its certainty 160
why opposed 161
objections answered ib.
its benefit to the good and misery to the wicked 165, &c.
its influence on us ib.
of Christ, *see* Christ.
Revelation, (divine) its reasonableness, certainty, and necessity. 52
how proved 101
its inward evidences 102
its outward evidences ib.
its difficulties 103
its excellency 100, &c. 118
Revenge 340
how suppressed 341
its bad effects 342
Rewards and punishments 148
what they teach us ib.
Riches, their uncertainty 39, 397
Rule of faith, *see* Scripture.
for reading the scripture, *see* Help.

Sabbath-day, how to be kept 83
why instituted ib.
of what advantage 84
changed into the Lord's day ib.
Sacrament, what 95
of baptism, its benefit ib.
of the Lord's-supper, what and its benefit 180
our duty to receive it ib. &c.
why ordained 181
preparation *before* receiving it 183
the danger of unworthy receiving it 184
when a spiritual guide is necessary 188

Sacrament, devotions and directions *at* the time of receiving it 189, 190
duties *after* receiving 191
means to encrease our regard for it ib.
the benefits of receiving it often 192
Sacrifice of Christ 124
Sacrilege, what 53
God's punishment of it 5
Saints, communion of 156
Salvation, where found ib.
Salutation of the Virgin Mary 122
Sanctification 150
Satisfaction for sin, necessary to obtain pardon of God 187, &c.
to men *see* Restitution.
or contentment, *see* Contentment.
of Christ, 43
Saviour, *see* Christ.
Scoffing at religion, a sin. 198
Scoffing at our neighbour, sinful 228
Scriptures (the holy) a rule of faith 90
their contents ib.
how to be read ib.
difficulties 103
see Religion and Revelation.
Seasonable reproof 345
Second covenant 43, 189
Securities, bad, are sinful 305
Self-love, an impediment to christian charity 368
Self-conceit, what, and how curbed 377
its bad effects ib.
Self-defence 296
denial, what, and its duty 450
is of great advantage 451
examination 183
murder 297
seeking 340
Selling, *see* Buying.
Selves, *see* Duty our
Sermons, how to be heard 92
the danger of some hearers 93
Sermons, the end of hearing them 93
Servants, their duty to masters 277
must be obedient and honest ib.
the danger of their dishonesty to themselves 278
must not answer again 280
must be diligent 281
Service, eye, condemned 277
Servitude, of God's appointment 281
Shame 67
Sickness, *see* Death, Will, Submission, Patience.
Sick persons 346
Simplicity in dealing 311
conversation 330. *see* Truth
Sin, what 157, 170
makes death terrible 479
how forgiven 158
its forgiveness comfortable to us ib.
when effectual 159
cannot be excused 169, 191
its danger 191, 223
must be avoided 405
other men's how we partake of them 273 288
drawing others to, an injury ib.
after baptism 219
against the Holy Ghost, what 153
Sincerity 330, &c.
Sins, forgiveness of 157
Sinners, *see* Wicked.
a caution about repentance 462
Slanderers 318
public 325
who partake of their sins 462
reasons against this vice 326
Sleep (time of) how to be measured 436
its abuse sinful and dangerous ib.

Sloth, *see* Idleness.
Sobriety 427. *See* Drinking
Son (God the) second person in the Trinity 106, &c.
Sorrow, *see* Pains, Grief.
Soul, its worth 34
immortality 35
state how determined 40
considered, both in its natural and spiritual state 287, 288
Soul, *see* Care of the soul.
Speaking evil, *see* Evil-speaking.
truth 330
Spirit, meek, in a wife, its advantages 263, 389
of God 150
Spiritual guide 189, 246
brethren 259
Spirituous liquors, *see* Drinking.
Sports 437
State of the soul 40
middle, what 473
Strength of body 308
Strife 364
Stripes, their sinfulness 293
Style of the Scriptures 103
Subjection, *see* Subordination.
in a married state 262
Subjects, their duty 228
Submission to God's will 76
in sickness 469
its benefits 76
its duty 77
how perfected; its fruits 77, 78
Subordination in a married state 262
its good effects 263
Sufferings of Christ, *see* Christ.
men 76, 469
Sunday, *see* Sabbath day.
Supererogation (works of) sinful 225
Supper of the Lord, *see* Lord's supper.
Superiors 228
Suretyship 306
Swearing, what, and when lawful 194
when unlawful ib.
Swearing, vain or common, its guilt and danger 194 *See.* Cursing, Oaths, Perjury.
Sympathy in afflictions 305

TAle-bearers 364
Taxes must be paid 228
Temperance in eating 419
drinking 422
sleep 436
recreations ib.
apparel 440
Temptation, how far able to oppose virtue 410
how guarded against 411
Ten Commandments 99, 226
Testimony of the Apostles 121, 137
Thanksgiving to God 205
Theft, what 305, 308
Thought, taking for your life, how to be understood 73
Thoughts, justice in our 330
how governed 369
our power over them 370
in what their liberty and morality consists 371
their first motions to be attended to 372
Threatnings of God 58, 460
Time, 434, 471
how to be spent 434, 474, 475
Tongue, the government of, *see* Cursing, Swearing, Lying, Slanderers, Backbiting, Reports, Detraction.
their bad consequences 325
Torments of Hell, *see* Hell
Trade, *see* Traffick,
Tradesmen's duty 407
Traffick, deceit in, its sinfulness 310
rules to be observed in it 311
unjust, seldom successful 314
fair, its advantages 315
Tribute, *see* Taxes.
Trinity of persons in the Godhead, why to be believed 112

Trinity, its difficulties 113
how to be inquired into 113
takes not away the use of reason 114
Troubles, *see* Afflictions, Trust, in God, *see* Providence.
Truth, *see* Evidence, Lying and Equivocation.
must always be spoken 333
Trust, a breach of, sinful 307
what it includes 309
deceit in ib.
in God, what 70
why necessary 71
in what manner 73, &c.
Turning to God not to be delayed 485

VAgrants 356
Vain-conceit 380
Vain glory, what its sin, danger, and folly 386
helps against it 387
Vanities, *see* Pomps.
Veracity of God 68, &c.
the Apostles 121, &c.
Vexatious law-suits 306, 357
Vice, *see* Sin, Lying, Debauchery.
Violence, *see* Murder, Oppression.
Virgin Mary 122
Virtue, the chief consideration in marriage 272
must be pursued 474, *see* Piety.
Visiting the sick 346
Unbaptised persons 100
Unchangeableness of God, *see* Promises of God.
Uncharitableness 321, 340
Uncleanness, *see* Lust, Chastity.
Union of the soul and body 33
two natures of Christ 124
Unity of God 105
Unmercifulness 347
Unlawful marriages 272
Unworthiness of works 78, 225
ministers lives 235
Uprightness, *see* Virtue.
Vows in baptism, what 97
their obligation 99 *See* Sacrament.
inconsiderate, rash, &c. 200

WAgering 427
Wages 278, 282
Wants, *see* Trust in God.
Wants of nature 401
Watchfulness in prayer 213
against sin 404
Wealth 385
Weights and measures unjust 312
Whispering a bad report, sinful 325
Wicked (the) are self-condemned 169
are left without excuse 170
ought to suffer eternally 167, 170
christians lives do not affect christianity 174
Wife, duty of a 260
must obey, and why 261
the danger of contention 262
the rules of her obedience 263 &c.
must be faithful, frugal, and modest in dress 264
must love her husband 265
how to secure her husband's affections ib.
how to behave to an adulterous husband 266
must be meek 263, 267
why she ought to be loved 268, &c.
must be maintained 270
instructed and prayed for 271
seduced, the injustice thereof 302
Will, last, how to be made in regard to children 253
when, and how to be made 467
Will-worship 216
Will of God 75, 78
Wisdom of God, submission to 75, 77
human 386
of being religious 75
Wit 322, 385
Witchcraft 74
Witness, false, the crime 324
Woman, why not so capable of ruling the family as the man is 261
Word of God, *see* God, Scripture.

Works, *see* Meekness.
Works, our best are unworthy 78
of the devil, what 97
of supererogation 225
Working of the Holy Ghost 150
World to renounce what 97
its creation 108
contempt of it 468
Worldly business, when to be avoided 191
Worldly affairs how to be settled 467
Worship due to God's name 201
bodily 115
Worth of the soul, *see* Soul.
Wounding, the sin of 293
ZEAL in prayer 115
in the faith 451
good, bad, christian 452
when abused, and how to be practised 345

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS.

	page.	
Directions and Prayers for the Morning,	485	489
Directions and Prayers for the Evening,	490	494
Prayers suited to the Articles of the Creed, &c.	516	523
Prayers for the Sick,	524	527

RECAPITULATION.

Care of the Soul,	33	48
Our duty towards God,	49	225
Our duty towards our neighbour,	226	368
Our duty towards ourselves,	369	483
Prayers,	485	527

ERRATA.

In 2nd Sunday, Section 2, the head should read *Of reverencing God's Ministers.*

5d Section 3, the head should read *The Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.*
Section 5, the head should read *Of the Trinity.*

8th Section 6, the head should read *Of going to law with Parents.*

9th, Section 2, the head should read *Of the duty of a Wife.*

10th Section 4, the head should read *In what cases it is lawful to shed blood.*

THE

PREFACE,

ENFORCING

THE NECESSITY OF CARING FOR THE SOUL.

I. *Man is composed of an* immortal *Soul, and,* II. *Of a* mortal *body.* III. *Of the* future state *of the soul, and how it is determined.* IV. *Persuasives to the Care of the Soul, from the nature of the* first *and* second COVENANTS; *shewing,* V. *That it is in every man's power, to take that Care of his Soul, which the gospel requires.*

I. *Man consists of a Soul and Body.*

THE intention of the ensuing Treatise, being to instruct all ranks and conditions of men, and to descend to the understandings of the very weakest capacities; in a short and plain explication of those DUTIES, which every one must believe and practice in this world, if they hope to be happy forever in the world to come; I shall introduce the whole, by endeavouring to draw them to the consideration and Care of their own Souls: which, being their first and general duty, ought to be preparatory to all the rest; because, whoso is not firmly persuaded of the necessity of this, will never give attention to the doctrines and exhortations of the other duties.

What must I do to be saved? is an enquiry, which deserves our utmost diligence and attention: for, if we be ignorant of the will of God; or knowing it, will not follow or be led by that unerring light, but suffer ourselves to be hurried away by our unruly passions in the pursuit of the things of this life; we are wretched and miserable, blind and naked, notwithstanding all our attainments; and we shall one day be convinced, to our sorrow, that there is no folly like that of preferring things temporal to things eternal.

Man consists of Soul and Body: a Soul, which never dieth; and which according to the care we take of it, in this life, is designed to return unto God, who made it; when the body shall return unto the earth from whence it was taken. He, therefore, who is truly wise, will consider, that he has a Soul, as well as a body, to take care of; a spiritual and immortal substance, which can never die; but, when loosed from that prison, in which it is now confined, must live for ever either in happiness or misery.

Of the soul and it's worth. We may rightly conclude, that the Soul of man is an immaterial principle distinct* from the body; and is the cause of those several operations, of which by inward sense and experience we are conscious to ourselves. It is that, whereby we think and remember, whereby we reason and debate about any thing, and freely chuse and refuse

* We learn from scripture (*Eccles.* iii. 21.) that a beast has a spirit distinct from it's body, and that the said spirit is separated from it by death; and, that they are not to be considered, as mere machines and engines without real sensation, as it is evident to us, as that men have sensations; for the brute beasts appear to have all the five senses, as truly as any man whatever. Nevertheless it will not follow, that their souls are immortal, in the sense we attribute immortality to the souls of men, because they are not capable of the exercise of reason and religion; whereas the immortality of man's soul consists not only in a capacity of living in a state, separate from the body; but of living so, as to be sensible of happiness or misery, in that state of separation; because they are not only endued with a faculty of sense but with other faculties, which do not depend upon, or have any connection with matter. Therefore, although it should be allowed, that the souls of brutes remain, when separated from their bodies; yet, being only endowed with a sensitive principle, the operations thereof depend upon an organical disposition of the body; which being once dissolved, they probably lapse into an insensible and inactive state; and being no further necessary, may return to their primitive nothing.

such things as are presented to us: it is so created by the divine wisdom and goodness, as not to have in itself any principle of corruption; but will naturally of itself continue for ever; and cannot, by any natural decay or power of nature, be dissolved or destroyed: for, when the body falls into the ground, the Soul will still remain and live separate from it; and continue to perform all such operations, towards which the organs of the body are not necessary; and not only continue, but live in this separate state, so as to be sensible of happiness or misery.

It's immortality proved by reason. These truths have great probability from the evidence of Reason; and natural arguments incline us to believe them. Now the arguments from reason are taken from the nature of the soul itself; for those several actions and operations, of which we are all conscious to ourselves; such as liberty or a power of chusing or refusing, and the several acts of reason and understanding; cannot, without great violence, be ascribed to matter, or be resolved into any bodily principle: we must therefore attribute them to another principle, different from matter; and consequently the soul is immortal, and incapable of corruption, in its own nature. Besides, when all men, though distant and remote from one another, and different in their tempers and manners, and ways of education; when the most barbarous nations, as well as the most polite, agree in a thing; we may well call it the voice of nature, or a natural notion or dictate of our minds: But it is evident, from the testimony of many ancient heathen writers, and the consent of several credible histories; that they believed, that men and women do live after death, and have an existence when separated from their bodies; and consequently that the soul is immortal. It is true, some few instances may be brought of some, who have denied this; but their opposition is no proof, that this notion is not natural: for some few exceptions are no better arguments against an universal consent, than some few monsters and prodigies are against the regular course of nature; because men may offer violence

to nature, and debauch their understandings by lust, interest or pride, and an affectation of singularity.

The sense of nature is very evident, from the great number of wicked men in the world; who (notwithstanding it be their interest, that there should be no life after this) cannot overcome the fears of those torments, in which the wicked are threatened to be punished for ever. This truth is confirmed, by those natural notions we have of God, and of the real difference between Good and Evil; for the belief of a God implies the belief of his infinite Goodness and Justice. The former, his Goodness inclines him to make some creatures more perfect than others, and capable of greater degrees of happiness, and of longer duration: because goodness delights in communicating its own perfections: and since in man are found the perfections of an immortal nature, which are knowledge and liberty; we may infer, that he is endowed with such a principle, as in its own nature is capable of eternal life. The latter, his infinite Justice, proves, that he loves righteousness, and hates iniquity: but, the dispensations of his providence in this world being very promiscuous, (so that good men often suffer, and that for the sake of righteousness; and wicked men frequently prosper, and that by means of their wickedness) it is reasonable, to believe the suitable distribution of rewards and punishments in a future state; because, as there is a difference between good and evil, founded in the nature of things; it is reasonable to imagine, they will be distinguished by rewards and punishments: not in this world but in a future state; where all things shall be set right and the justice of God's providence vindicated; which is the very thing meant by the immortality of the soul.

Lastly, The natural hopes and fears of men cannot well be accounted for, without the belief of the soul's immortality. What would it avail, to be desirous of perpetuating a name to posterity, and by brave actions endeavour to purchase fame; if there were not a belief of an existence in another world, to enjoy it? Can it be thought, that they, who by the virtue and piety of

their lives, by the justice and honesty of their actions, have endeavoured to seek the Lord, have not been raised to an expectation of rewards after death?—Again; how can any one account, for that shame and horror, which follow the commission of any wicked action; though covered with the greatest privacy, and unknown to any but the offender? Certainly it can only be the effect of nature which suggests to them the certainty of an after-reckoning; when they shall be punished for their bad actions, or rewarded for their good; and so fills the one with hopes, and the other with fear and dread*.

These are such arguments as, in reason, the nature of the thing will bear: for an immortal nature is neither capable of the evidence of sense, nor of mathematical demonstration; and therefore we shall content ourselves with these arguments in this matter so far as to suffer ourselves to be persuaded, that it is highly probable.

By Scripture. But that, which giveth us the greatest assurance of it, is the revelation of the Gospel, whereby life and immortality are brought to light; and which is the only sure foundation of our hopes and an anchor for our faith; because the authority of God is above all reason and human knowledge. The resurrection of Christ is not only a manifest proof of his divine authority, and that he was a prophet sent from God; but also, that we shall rise again, to be reunited with our souls: it should therefore make us prefer the interest of our Souls, before all the advantages of this life: nay, it should make us ready and willing to part with every thing that is most dear to us in this world, to secure their eternal welfare; because, if we lose our own souls, all the enjoyments of this world can make us no recompence. Though the fall of our first parents have made us all subject to death; yet our Souls, when separated from our bodies, shall live in another state: and even our bodies, though committed to the grave and turned to

* *See the reasonableness* of a last judgment in Sunday 4. *Sect.* vii.

dust, shall at the last day rise again, and be reunited to our Souls; and being so united, the whole man, Body and Soul, shall be made capable of eternal happiness or misery.

II. *Of the Body.*

Since this is the case with all of us, how inconsiderately do men act, in spending so much thought about the Body: which is the seat of pains and the most noisome diseases, whilst it is alive; and which death (which it cannot escape) renders so intolerably offensive and odious, that it must be buried out of our sight! To spend all our time and care, about this vile part, the Body; and to neglect the most valuable part, the Soul, which is of inestimable worth on account of its noble faculties, and as it is made after God's own image, and is to exist to all eternity: This certainly argues the greatest degree of imprudence and stupidity; and therefore our greatest kindness for our Body is to take care of our Soul. Consider, whether we be able to live in the midst of everlasting fire! If the burn of a finger be so painful, or a small spark of fire so intolerable to the least part of the Body; Who can endure the fire, which can never be quenched, and whose torments after thousands and millions of years are no nearer an end, than they were at the first moment they began? Yet, this is the woful and certain end of every one, who neglects the care of his own soul. Not that I would be understood to intend, that we must neglect our bodies: but that, which promotes the interests of our souls, must be preferred before any interests of the body which cannot live without the soul.

No certain happiness. Every present enjoyment, be it ever so comfortable, may be lost; and riches, whatever advantage they give us, may make themselves wings and fly away. How many have been reduced in a few hours, from plentiful circumstances to extreme necessity, by fire or water? Besides, if people imagine themselves secure in an inheritance,

a small observation of human life may shew, that this cannot absolutely be depended upon; for, fraud, and violence may turn a man out of his fortune or estate. As to health, the greatest of our outward enjoyments, where is the person, that can depend upon a continued state of it? The most confirmed constitution is not proof against the assaults of pain or sickness: for every member of the body, every bone, joint and sinew lies open to many disorders; and the greatest prudence or precaution, or skill of the Physician, cannot many times prevent those disorders from coming upon us, much less ascertain health to us. Again, we often see the highest honours exchanged, for the lowest abasements and contempt. So the rich man is frequently reduced to poverty, and the healthy man laid upon a bed of languishing: all the pleasures the sinner can receive, from the most careful gratification of his sensual appetites, are but of the very same kind with those, whereof brute beasts are capable as well as he; only with this difference, that their enjoyments are more affecting, and less allayed with bitterness, than his are; besides, his having far more uneasiness and trouble in them, than of delight and satisfaction. The covetous, the proud, the envious, the glutton, the drunkard, the whoremonger, the ambitious, the revengeful, can testify, out of their own sad experience; that when they have summed up the matter, the contentment, which they receive from the gratification of these several passions or appetites, doth no ways countervail the pains and restlessness, the disturbances and disappointments, and the manifold evil consequences (both as to their body and soul, their good name and estate) which they suffer upon the account of them. Whence we may cry out with the preacher; *Vanity of vanities!* All is vanity, which does not tend to the care of the immortal soul; for the body itself, to which alone such gratifications are suited, is ever tending towards the dust; and will soon be stripped of all sensation of worldly things, and entirely lose the relish of those things, which once had been most agreeable to it: and yet no man is ex-

empt from this debt; we must all go down to the silent grave, and can carry none of those things along with us; and all our pleasures and ease, if they should happen to last so long, must then have their end.

III. *How the state of the soul is determined.*

On the other hand, that, which serves the interest of our souls, is more lasting, and is never taken from us: its state hereafter will be determined, by our behaviour in this life: heaven or hell, happiness or misery, will be our final portion, just as death finds us: as soon as death strikes, we either are in torments or go to paradise; either become the companions of devils, or the associates of holy angels, so to remain to all eternity: whereof our greatest care should be, to avoid the one, and to obtain the other.

Motives for taking care of the soul. We are often determined, in the affairs of this life, by the hope and fear of things to come; as all our pursuits, and most of our actions, are for the sake of something future and not yet in sight; that is, either to prevent some evil feared, or to obtain some good desired: for, in the beginning of life, people apply themselves to become masters of some profession or trade or business, in hopes of a livelihood or of serviceableness, when they arrive at riper years; though they be not sure they shall ever live to be masters of what they labour after; nor certain of success in the most prudent steps they can take, to accomplish the end of their worldly expectations, of which we have far less certainty, than of an immortal state. Shall it then be said, that we shall be less diligent in the care of our souls, whose affairs are not so uncertain? Though we therein act upon a future prospect; yet divine promise ascertains us of success in the way of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, though the benefit be future, yet we should not abate our zeal in prosecuting it: that does not prevail on men, to slacken their endeavours for their worldly gain; how unreasonable then must they be who have the advantage of a better hope in their aims

for another life, and yet neglect the means to attain that happy state? Again, it can be no excuse for a man to say, that he cannot comply with that self-denial, mortification, and other christian duties; which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and without which the soul languisheth and is sick, and his faith is dead: for he cannot be ignorant of that plain rule of wisdom, to decline a present pleasure for one equal to it of longer continuance, or to submit to a present inconvenience, to prevent one more lasting; or to obtain a more lasting good, though there be no difference in the things themselves, but only in their duration. A wise man will never refuse to go through a short course of physic in an ill habit of body, upon a fair prospect of procuring a regular state of health thereby; nor neglect to give a small sum of money in hand, upon security of enjoying a good inheritance in a few years after: and shall he neglect to take proper care of his soul, to cleanse it from all impurity, and to prepare it for the enjoyment of that blessed state of eternal happiness; which is promised to all those, who love God and keep his commandments; especially as the most lasting things below bear no proportion to eternal happiness? If we measure them with eternity, they are as nothing; and a minute compared with our whole lives is no proportion, in comparison of time and eternal duration.

Why eternal happiness is desirable. Whatever is temporal, therefore, is incapable of giving full satisfaction, because it may be taken from us. So when we are upon an enquiry after happiness, we may discern at first, that the Earth says, 'It is not in me; for 'every thing here is perishing, and must soon have an 'end.' Thus the continuance of happiness is the most satisfying character of it; and the eternity of misery, the most bitter ingredient thereof: it is impossible to be perfectly happy, with the prospect of an end before us. This consideration that we should never be deprived of them would magnify inferior delights: and light afflictions, with eternity written upon them, could not be borne. What then should we think of

perfect happiness and complete misery; both of the highest kind, both eternal; in one of which mankind must live for ever? Oh! then let us apply to ourselves the force and evidence of that question; 'What is a 'man profited, if he should gain the whole world and 'lose his own soul? Or, what will a man give in ex-'change for his soul?' Time bears no proportion to eternity: the most exalted pleasures of this life, which at best are but of a short continuance, can never compensate for the loss of that happiness, which God has prepared for them that love him: yet there are too many who make this sad choice. Not, that any man chuses evil for the sake of evil, or prefers misery before happiness: but as he ,who obeys the commandments of God, chuses life; so he; who transgresses them, chuseth death; that death, which God has threatened to the sinner; even death eternal: for the wages of sin is death.

IV. *Persuasives to the care of the soul.*

As the condition of the body at the last day must follow that of the soul; it is our greatest interest, to consider the present state of human nature, and the means, by which alone it is possible for us to be made happy. If we neglect the disorders of the understanding, will, and affections, which are the parts of the soul; the flesh will ruin us, at the very time it pretends to please us; and the devil will gain many opportunities of beguiling us: whilst the understanding is darkened, and shut against good instructions; the will inclines to choose evil, and the affections are bent after the pleasures of sin. It is true, man was made holy and upright by God; but having fallen from him by voluntary transgression and wilful disobedience, he presently sunk into a corrupt and degenerate, into a miserable and cursed condition, both in respect of this life, and to that life which is to come. The disobedience of our first parents involved their posterity, and entailed a depravity of nature upon their descendants: which depravity though it be not a sin in us, till our will closes with it and deliberately consents to

it; yet it is certainly sinful in itself, and is thence stiled *Original Sin*. Our church therefore has rightly decreed, *That 'Original Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*; but it is the fault and corruption of 'the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered 'of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far 'gone from original righteousness, and is of his own 'nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always, contrary to the spirit: and therefore, in every 'person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath 'and damnation. And this infection of nature doth 'remain; yea, in them that are regenerated: and although there is no condemnation for them, that believe and are baptized; yet the apostle doth confess, 'that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature 'of sin.' Thus by Original Sin, man is not only deprived of the image of God, but becomes liable to his justice; and as such, God cannot take pleasure in him; and that man who dies before he is restored to his favour, must be separated from him, and be forever miserable.

As man could not recover, nor raise himself, out of his own ruin; and as no creature was able to do it; the mercy of God pitied our misery, and his wisdom devised this expedient to reconcile his mercy and justice; 'that no man should, on account of original 'sin, be eternally miserable, except through his own 'fault: and his goodness resolved, that the Son of God should undertake this work, and satisfy the offended justice of the Almighty, and repair the ruined nature of mankind.' Thus did God enter into a new covenant with man, by way of remedy for what was past and could not be undone: which as may be fully collected from the gospel, was to this purpose; 'That, 'on condition of man's steadfast faith, sincere repentance, and perfect obedience, he should be restored 'through Christ to God's favour, and (after death) to 'that life and happiness, which was promised to our 'first parents without tasting of death.' Remission of

* See the 9th Article of Religion.

sins, the condition on God's part of the covenant, is always ready to be made good; if we fail not on our part, of having worthily repented and reformed our lives. Our Saviour has made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: he has suffered a cruel and ignominious death, upon the cross, for our sakes, and, by his death and sufferings, has purchased this grace for us, that real repentance and sincere obedience shall be accepted instead of innocence: but, without this repentance and renewed obedience, we shall not be accepted upon any terms. The sacrifice, which he offered upon the cross, although of infinite value, will not avail us; unless in conformity to his death and resurrection, we die unto sin and rise again unto newness of life, nothing, but a good life will entitle us to the favour and love of God, and, without his favour, we are of all creatures the most miserable. Not that the condition of the gospel covenant is a perfect unsinning obedience; but a sincere endeavour to obey all the commands of God, to the utmost of our power, which commands in their general and most proper sense, are so far from being impossible to be observed; that, on the contrary, a man cannot easily transgress them without an hardened conscience and deliberate choice. Whensoever God requires more of us, than we are naturally able to perform, he never fails to afford us proportionably great assistance, to enable us to perform what he so requires: and if, through the frailty and infirmity of our nature, notwithstanding our sincere endeavours to the contrary, we be at any time surprised into the commission of sin, God accepts real repentance and a renewed obedience, instead of an uninterrupted course of holiness. Hence it is abundantly evident, that, as the true and only design of the laws of the gospel is, to make us holy and undefiled, so it is possible for us, to be really holy, according to the true intent and meaning of those laws. Wherefore as the excellent nature and design of our religion sufficiently recommends it to our judgment; so the possibility of obeying it is a most powerful encourage-

ment to us, to set in earnest about the practice of it: But then we must always consider; that, as God requires nothing more of us, than a sincere obedience, according to the gracious terms of the gospel-covenant; so he will not accept of any thing less: for, as it is possible for us to be holy and undefiled according to the true intent of the laws of our religion; so God has made it the indispensable condition of our happiness, that we actually and in reality become such holy persons. By the means I have mentioned, God and man are brought together again; and man is redeemed from a state of sin and eternal death, to a state of holiness and the inheritance of eternal life.

Our care will not be in vain. This was the end for which the son of God cloathed himself with our flesh, that as man, he might suffer what our sins had deserved; and that as he was the Son of God, he might make a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction to the divine justice, for the sins of the whole world: for the joy of delivering so many millions of souls from misery, he endured the death of the cross, and all the afflictions of his bitter passion; which was the perfect sacrifice, whereby all mankind are restored to the favour of God and put into a state of salvation. God has promised for his Son's sake, to pardon all such as shall repent and forsake their sins, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; to give his holy spirit to all such, as shall sincerely pray for the same; and after death to make them eternally happy, if during this short state of trial (which is designed to amend our corrupt and disordered nature) they endeavour to observe the rules, which he has revealed in his word, and which are absolutely necessary to make them capable of eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

An exhortation to a holy life. Seeing a good life is attended with so many advantages, as to make us live happily and die comfortably, and at last entitle us (through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ) to an eternal inheritance in that kingdom, which he has purchased for us with his most precious blood; and seeing on the other hand guilt is its own punishment in

this world, and everlasting misery will most certainly be the lot and portion of the wicked and impenitent in the next; what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? How steadfast and unmoveable should this make us, in the ways of God's laws, and in the works of his commandments? With what indignation and abhorrence should we look upon sin, and with what speed should we fly from that dreadful enemy of our souls, who would rob us of our present as well as future happiness? How should the consideration of these things make us take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God? How stedfastly should we resolve, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: but to walk as children of light, in the ways of true piety and holiness; and not to delay for one moment, the care of our immortal souls? Although God be of infinite goodness and mercy, patient and long-suffering towards sinners, unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; yet we must remember, that he is also infinitely just, and will assuredly vindicate the honour of his laws. All sin and wickedness is an abomination in his sight: He is of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity; and if his wrath be kindled (yea, but a little) what will become of the wicked and ungodly? Nothing, but a sincere repentance and amendment of life, will be sufficient to secure them from the vengeance; which he has threatened to pour down, upon all obstinate and rebellious sinners: and true repentance will most undoubtedly avert his anger.

V. *It is in every man's power, to take care of his soul.*

To conclude with the sentiments of a devout and pious divine: The great plea, which men generally make for the wickedness or carelesness of their lives is this; 'That it really is not in their power, to live 'up to such a state of holiness and virtue, as the law 'of God obligeth them to: grace is in them too weak 'and their natural corruptions too strong for their be-

'ing ever in a capacity, without more assistance from 'God, to live strict and religious lives: conversion is 'the work of God, and cannot be wrought by a man's 'self; and therefore till God shall please to come up- 'on them with an irresistible power of his Holy Spirit 'they must be contented to live as they do; nay, they 'must unavoidably live so.' Now, it is readily granted; that, without God's grace, no man can do any thing: and we grant likewise, that it is very probable, their circumstance may be such, as to make it morally impossible, without greater strength and more grace than they have, to live on a sudden as they ought to do; for, bad principles are more powerful, than good; but yet, in the mean time, we must needs tell them, they are not mere stocks and stones. How much reason soever they have to complain, of the infirmity or degeneracy of their natures; yet some things they can do, towards the bettering of them: for instance, though they cannot on a sudden conquer the inward bent and inclination of their minds, so as to hate all sin, and to delight in virtue; yet, they must needs confess, they have a power over their outward actions: they can as well (if they think it reasonable) direct their feet towards a church, as to a house of gaming or drinking or lewdness: their eyes will serve them as well, to look upon a bible or a serious discourse about religion, as to read a scurrilous and prophane book: it is as much in their power (if they please,)to give ear to the reasonable advice of their sober friends, as to the mad harangues of the dissolute company they keep.

These things, they must needs acknowledge, they can do, if they will; nay, and they can do more than this; for (if they please) they may give themselves time to consider and think, of what they read, or what is said to them, or what their own experience or observation of things will suggest to their minds; and they can further (if they please) to their consideration add their prayers to Almighty God, to direct them, to assist them, to strengthen them: and though it be certain, that all this, without God's especial grace, will not be effectual for their regeneration and conversion, yet, if they will but

do as much as this comes to, we can assure them, that in time they shall have this especial grace, which they now want. In the same proportion, that they use and employ those gifts and powers, which they at present have; God will encrease and enlarge them. The truth of all this is confirmed to us, by that memorable saying of our Saviour, which we find in his mouth at several times and upon several occasions. 'To him that 'hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; 'but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even 'that which he hath.' Let it then, above all things, be our great and constant endeavour, to make him our friend; who is the best of beings, the sovereign good and happiness of all his creatures, and the fountain and foundation of all our comforts and enjoyments in this life, and of all our hopes and expectations in that which is to come: let us make religion the great business of our lives; and whilst we have time and opportunity, let us prepare ourselves, by a life of virtue and righteousness, for that great account, which we must one day give: let not the pleasures and vanities of this world, which will shortly have an end, make us unmindful of the great and momentous concerns of eternity. There shall in no wise enter, into that holy place, any thing which defileth; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lye; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life: these are the good and virtuous; who have kept themselves from the pollutions of this wicked world, and have led a life of piety and renewed obedience towards God, and of love and charity towards their neighbours.

The PRAYER.

O GOD, the protector of all who trust in thee; who wast pleased to accept the death and passion of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, as an expiation for the sins of mankind, and a ransom of their guilty souls from the torments of hell! Grant, that I may duly weigh the efficacy of his merits, and faithfully improve the benefits of my redemption. Let not the pleasures of sin betray me, nor the craftiness of Satan deceive me; but do thou guard and protect me, with thy blessed Spirit, against all spiritual temptations; and let me always have the danger and care of my soul before my eyes, and the torments of the damned fresh in my memory: so that, by contemplating the misery of others, I may hate their practices and avoid their punishments; through the all sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen

THE FIRST PART

OF THE NEW

Whole Duty of Man:

CONTAINING

OUR DUTY TOWARDS GOD.

SUNDAY I.

I. *Of true Morality, and of the* Duty of Man, *as taught by* natural *and* revealed *Religion; containing the three great branches of our Duty, to* GOD, *to our* Neighbour, *and to* Ourselves. II. *Our Duty to* God, *is, to believe in him, and in his affirmations, commands, promises, and threatnings.*— III. *To* hope *in him, without presumption or despair.* IV. *To* love *him, for his excellencies and kindness.* V. *To* fear *him, rather than men.*— VI. *To* trust *in him, in all dangers and wants.*— VII. *To* submit *to his divine will, both in respect of obedience and patience, in all his commands and disposals.*

I. *Of true Morality.*

THE Christian Religion being the means, which God has appointed, for the restoring mankind to his favour, forfeited by wilful disobedience; and for his recovering the image of God: the Almighty does therein give us a new hope and title to that everlasting happiness, for which man was at first created: but this is only to be hoped for, on certain conditions; namely, our lively faith and sincere and hearty endeavours to obey his will; on the performance and ne-

glect whereof depend our eternal happiness and misery. It is therefore of the greatest importance to us to enquire what that faith is, and what those several things are, to which God requires our obedience. But first (I think) it will not be improper to consider, what we are to understand by true Morality.

True morality, in the largest sense of the word, consists in acting agreeably to those relations, which we bear to our Creator and fellow-creatures; it takes in even our duty to our blessed Saviour and Redeemer; unless either gratitude be no part of morality, or unless he, who was the author of our eternal salvation, be entitled to no gratitude from us. But nothing is more common, than to substitute some part of our duty for the whole: of this we have a pregnant instance in those whom the world miscalls mere moral men. A mere *moral* man, in the language of the world, is he, who, though he live in a state of open disregard of religion in general, or at least a fashionable indifference to it; yet shall do some generous and good-natured actions, and never be guilty of any flagrant breach of honesty: he, who condemns the man, who is wanting in proper returns of gratitude and affection to his fellow-creatures, but never condemns himself, who continually receives, and never acknowledges the favours he receives, from the Author of every good gift. It is absurd, to pretend a love for benevolence, and yet be regardless of the most benevolent being; and it is likewise absurd, to pretend to love him, without a serious examination into his will, never dismissing what bears that venerable stamp, without a fair and impartial hearing of the evidences for the truth of it. On whomsoever the world may bestow the title of *moral* men, yet an indifferent carelessness, and a wilful neglect to examine into God's will and pleasure, is no part of Morality: nay, his will (whose pleasure we must do, or unavoidably suffer displeasure) ought to be the uppermost consideration of every man. Yet some may urge, 'That there are several of strict probity, generosity, and worth, without the 'least tincture of piety.' To which I answer, 'Several 'have, from their infancy, associated the ideas of hap-

'piness and esteem, of misery and disgrace: this makes 'them decline those actions, which may entail infamy 'and disgrace upon them; and pursue those which may 'beget an esteem for them: esteem being to them an 'essential ingredient of happiness: for which reason 'they are impatient to have the favorable verdict, which 'they pass upon themselves, seconded and confirmed 'by the approbation of others; and are unwilling to do 'any thing which may lessen them in the opinion of 'their fellow creatures.' It is then, the desire of fame, not the love of virtue, which is their incentive to good actions: and, if we look abroad into the world we shall find it thus in fact. Persons of this stamp will scorn to do a little thing, through the abhorrence of any thing which may make them cheap and contemptible in the eye of the world: but they will not scruple to commit a sin, upon which the world has stamped a credit, and to which fashion hath given a sanction. A person, who is ungrateful, especially to his sovereign benefactor, must be void of every thing which is great, glorious, and beautiful in the soul: he may, indeed, be actuated by the love of applause, by caprice, by the prevailing mode and fashion of the age in which he lives; but his mind is too narrow, contracted, and ungenerous, to be swayed by any fixed and determined principle of goodness. You may wonder at this motley mixture in his character: but, why should you expect a consistency of life and manners from a man who has no religious, and therefore no consistent principle to act upon? He, who observes the rules of morality for the sake of temporal pleasures, will never perform any act of duty that is highly distasteful to him, or forgo any vice that is pleasant or palatable. This is the *moral* man in the language of the world; but, in the language of reason, he is as immoral a man, as can be conceived: for he lives daily in the uninterrupted practice of immorality of the deepest dye, *viz.* ingratitude to his sovereign benefactor; from whom he has received every thing, and to whom he can return nothing, but obedience and thanksgiving, the tribute of a grateful heart. What shall we think, of this set of men? It would be uncharitable, to suppose

them determined Atheists, it is likely, they imagine, God will accept the social duties, in lieu of piety: but true morality is inseparably connected, with the highest regard to the deity; and it is an unnatural divorce, to part them asunder: For the only sure ground-work of morality is the prospect of heavenly bliss.

Of natural religion. It is certain, the light of nature, discovers to us the being of a God, and so much of his infinite perfection, as to teach us, that he is all good, and hateth every thing that is evil; that he loveth those, who avoid evil and chuse good; and with severe justice will punish evil-doers: so that the light of nature searcheth out the goodness and justice of God, and man's duty and subjection to his creator; and disposes us, to receive the perfect will of the Almighty. This is called natural religion, which all men might know; and to this they should be obliged, by the mere principles of reason, improved, by consideration and experience, without the help of revelation; and they, who live by it, shall also be judged by it, their consciences accusing or else excusing one another. But natural religion (the religion, which the light of nature discovers) is not sufficiently calculated for the generality of mankind, as may be inferred from hence; that, to trace a considerable number of doctrines up to the fountain-head from which they flow, and to pursue them to their remotest consequences, by the strength of unassisted reason, is a task extremely difficult, at least to men of letters, and (I may venture to say) impracticable to the ignorant: besides, pure natural religion may perhaps have existed. in the minds of some few recluse contemplative men; but, was never in fact established by any one nation, from the foundation of the world to the present times, But

Of revealed Religion. The dimness of natural religion is cleared up by *revealed religion; the method, by which God makes himself, or his will, known to mankind, over and above what he hath made known to us by the light of nature: not, that God did mean

* See *Sunday* 3. Sect. 1.

hereby, to put out any part of that natural light, which he had set up in our souls; but to give greater light unto men. The possibility of revealed religion is therefore evident, from the nature of God and the capacities of men; as well as from that proof, which is produced to satisfy us concerning a mission from God. An infinite being, who created our souls capable of knowing and loving him, can never want power, to communicate farther light to our minds, and make brighter discoveries of his will and pleasure: it carries no opposition to natural light, that God should reveal his mind by some particular persons to the world; forasmuch, as the great ignorance and corruption of human nature, and that misery and guilt, which mankind had contracted, made it both necessary and expedient for man. Though natural light ascertain the being of a Deity, and shew us how reasonable it is to pay our adorations to that power, which created and preserves us; yet it does not sufficiently direct us, in the way and manner of performing it: though it gives us some hopes of pardon upon our repentance from the general notion of God's goodness; yet it prescribes us no certain method for obtaining our reconciliation: so that revealed religion was necessary, both to relieve the wants of men in a natural state, and to recover the lustre and brightness of those principles, which God originally implanted in them, now sullied and impaired by the corruptions of mankind: to add such improvements, as might draw human nature to a true sense of its own bad state and weakness; and to instruct men in the method of obtaining pardon of their offended creator.

The design of those, who would undermine christianity, on the contrary, is plainly this: they are for carving out a religion for themselves, instead of leaving that work to a Being of unerring wisdom; the consequence of which is, that they always take up with a maimed and defective morality, instead of a fixed determined scheme of duties, complete in all its parts, and consistent upon the whole: They are for contriving a religion, which may sit easy upon them;

suited, rather to their own vicious relish of things, than to the genuine standard of uncorrupted reason: They are for doing, what seemeth good in their own short-sighted eyes, dimmed by passion; instead of acquiescing in the will of that Being, who seeth not as man seeth; who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past, unto the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son Jesus Christ. In the revelation of Christ are contained, Articles of Faith to be believed, precepts of life to be practised, and motives and arguments to enforce obedience; whence it is natural to collect, that the knowledge of the holy scripture is necessary to our eternal salvation: because it is the great and standing revelation of God to mankind; wherein the nature of God, and his will concerning our duty, and the terms and conditions of our eternal happiness in another world, are fully and plainly declared to us.

The three GREAT *branches of man's duty.* Though there be some things in scripture, which our reason and understanding cannot fathom: yet, because we are satisfied they are revealed by God, who cannot lye, whose knowledge is infallible, and whose word is true; we ought upon this higher, and superior reason, to yield a firm assent to the truth of them: though some complain of the Bible, as not clear and determinate enough in certain points; yet, perhaps, the main quarrel against it will be found to be, that it is too clear and determinate, in enjoining certain duties, and forbidding certain vices: and, though we meet therein with many precepts of life, which corrupt nature may be unwilling to put in practice; yet we must remember, it is the Lord commands them, and we should obey with the resignation becoming a child of God: 'Lord, not my will, but thine be done!' By the mouth of his holy apostle God hath expressly commanded us, to live *soberly*, *righteously*, and *godly* in this present world; by the word *soberly*, signifying our duty to OURSELVES; by the word *righteously*, our duty to our NEIGHBOUR; and by the word *godly*, our duty to GOD. As religion itself is that purity, that virtuous temper and disposition

of mind, which exerts itself in a constant endeavour of being like unto God, and of obeying his commands; which is the principal distinction of men from the inferior orders of creatures, and upon which alone are grounded all hopes of life and happiness hereafter; so the great end and design of religion is, by the trial of men's virtue and integrity in the present world, to qualify them for the happiness of that, which is to come; that they who have been faithful in a small and temporary trust committed to them here, may hereafter be put in possession of a never-failing inheritance, which shall be their own for ever.

In a matter of so great importance, therefore, it is very wonderful, that a man, who calls himself a reasonable creature, should be careless and indifferent; careless, whether he have any religion, or none; indifferent, whether his religion, when he does profess any, be true or false: careless, when he has embraced the true religion, whether he make any improvement in his practice answerable to it or no: so that the foundation of a Christian's duty is a due regard of *God*, our *neighbour* and *ourselves*.

II. *Our duty to* God.

'Our duty towards God is, to believe in him, to 'fear him, and to love him, with all our heart, with 'all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our 'strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to 'put our whole trust in him, to call upon him, to ho-'nour his holy name and his word, and to serve him 'truly all the days of our life*. In this short description of our duty towards God, we are directed to believe and acknowledge the being and self-existence of a God: that he is, from everlasting and world without end: that he is a spirit whom no man hath seen or can see: that he is the great creator and preserver of all things, the father of lights; in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; cloathed with

* See the first Answer after the Commandments in the Church Catechism.

the infinite perfections of power, wisdom and goodness, from which all the other divine attributes do flow: and that in the god-head there are three distinct persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. He therefore, who cometh to God, must thus believe; that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

It is in vain, to make profession of religion, without being first well instructed and firmly persuaded of the being and attributes of God; right notions of which, every one knows, are the foundation of all religion: but then this knowledge must not be a bare speculation; but a serious, practical, affecting impression and deep sense upon the mind, of a supreme being; who created the world by his power, preserves and governs it by his goodness and wisdom, and will judge it with justice, mercy and truth: of such a supreme being, whose glory no eye can behold: whose majesty no thought can comprehend; whose power no strength can resist; from whose presence no swiftness can flee; from whose knowledge no secret can be concealed; whose justice no art can evade; of whose goodness every creature partakes; so that the duty of believing in God implies, not only our believing his being, and his being governor and judge of the world; but also, that we have worthy and honourable apprehensions of his nature and attributes. Now, as without belief in God there can be no religion: so, where there is such a belief in God, the scripture always in course supposes it accompanied with every other part of true religion: and, what those parts are, I shall now inform you. Wherefore,

Of faith in God. Our *first* approach to God is by Faith; without which it is impossible to please God. Now faith is a firm belief of things at present not seen; a conviction upon the mind, of the truth of the promises and threatnings of God, made known in the scriptures; of the certain reality, of the rewards and punishments of the life to come: which enables a man, in opposition to all the temptations of a corrupt world, to obey God in expectation of an invisible re-

ward hereafter. As faith also is a sincere persuasion of the mind, concerning the certainty or credibility of any truth or fact arising from another's testimony; the reason of faith in the holy scriptures is strong and forcible: because that is the testimony of God, concerning those things, in which are contained the means of eternal life; which may properly be reduced to these particulars; *affirmations*, *commands*, *threatenings*, and *promises*. And

First of his *affirmations*: such are the creation of the world; the dispensations of providence in former ages; and, above all, the Son of God manifested in the flesh; his life and death, his resurrection and ascension into heaven; the distinction of the blessed Trinity into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the dead; the last judgment, and the rewards and punishments which will ensue upon it. These affirmations of God contained in Scripture, (though above our understanding, and not to be perceived by sense, nor to be seen through with the closest application yet,) if we have faith and trust in his promises, become present unto us.

The next instance by which we are to shew our faith in God's word, is to believe that all his *commands* are true, just, and fit to be commanded; and that they are the rule and measure of our obedience, to shew us, wherein and how we must obey him.—Therefore our faith in his commands, must be constantly shewn by our sincere obedience.

The *third* thing in scripture, which demands our belief, are God's *promises* of outward necessaries, present ease and refreshment, and of all the benefits of Christ's death and passion: the promise of divine guidance to the weakness of our understandings and judgments; of strength in tribulation; of grace under temptations; and of acceptance and pardon, upon our faith and sincere endeavours; which is always to be accounted a necessary condition on our part. The end therefore of our belief in God's promises is, to stir us up to perform the conditions; which when we have done, we may justly apply the promises to our-

selves, and expect our share in them: but till then, how sure soever we believe these promises to be, we cannot hope for any benefit from them; seeing, we are not the persons to whom they were made, until we have performed the conditions they require.

We are also to believe that God is just and powerful; that he will and is able to *punish* sinners, both with spiritual and temporal afflictions, and eternal destruction: and we are not only to believe, that the terrors of the Lord are recorded for our admonition and caution; but to preserve us from those sins, to which these punishments are justly threatened: and to recover us to repentance, when we have fallen; or to fortify us against compliance, in the hour of temptation. This is the object of faith, fitted to work upon our minds on account of its certainty and importance. We have all the assurance of the truth of these, that we are capable of in this life, from the dictates of reason and the general consent of mankind, besides the most credible revelation of these things in the gospel. How strange then is it, that some satisfy themselves with the zeal they express for the profession of the true religion, though they dishonour that profession by unrighteous works: That others expect to obtain salvation by the strength of their faith, utterly mistaking the very meaning of the word faith: apprehending it to signify credulity, instead of fidelity; and that they shall be accepted for being confident, instead of faithful servants! That some depend upon certain things, which can be done for them by others; as if any thing could, in the religious sense, be of advantage to any man, which does not at all make him the better man! That others rely upon the merits of Christ: deceiving themselves with an expectation, that Christ will rescue them from punishment, though they themselves reject all the motives by which his gospel proposes to rescue them from sin! And, as to the importance of this faith, every one must own, that the highest hopes and the greatest fears are sufficient springs of human actions: for what can concern us more, than eternal happiness and eternal misery? Thus we may observe

that faith in God, thro' Jesus Christ, includes our obedience to his laws, and produceth in the heart of a sincere and true believer, an humble hope in his promises.

III. *Of Hope in God.*

A *second* duty to God is HOPE: which is a strong reliance and dependance upon the truth and goodness of the Lord, for his performance of those things promised on his part; which also is a condition of our acceptance with him. So that an humble hope, the effect of faith, is a proper homage to God upon the foot of his infallible truth; that he neither can be mistaken himself, nor is under any temptation to deceive us.

Whatever God says must be true, and accordingly claims our firm hope and dependance; though we can have no other evidence for it besides his word: yet we should indeed be very careful, that we have the word of God to support our hope, and that we have used the best means in our power to understand the true meaning of God's word, which are the only means to guard us against those two pernicious extremes, presumption and despair, which interrupt or destroy this duty. Therefore, though the apostle has taught us in general, to hope all things, we must watch our own corruption, and not suffer it to rely too much upon our own strength. For we are guilty of the great sin of *presumption*, when we neglect those means of grace, which are established in order to enable us to perform our duty; when we rashly run ourselves into temptations, presuming upon our own ability to encounter them; and, even in those trials which the providence of God brings upon us, when we trust more to our own resolution than to his divine assistance; and consequently he, who hopeth for pardon of sins and eternal life, without that repentance and obedience, to which alone they are promised, is a presumptuous hypocrite, whose hope shall perish. For, this self-confident temper often betrays us, to undertake what we have neither capacity nor ability to perform: It makes us neglect those previous measures, which are necessary to accomplish what we design: it teaches us

by dear bought experience, the frailties and infirmities of our nature: It frequently makes shipwreck of a good conscience, and provokes God to withdraw his Grace: which we lay so little stress upon, in order to our preservation. And therefore,

To cure this sort of presumption, we should consider the weakness and frailty of human nature, and the frequent instances of it in our own conduct, and how unable we are of ourselves to do any thing that is good; we should reflect upon those eminent examples, which have been fatally betrayed by too great a confidence in themselves; and which are set up as so many marks, for us to avoid those rocks upon which they split. Yet,

Of Despair. We are not to be so borne down with our sins, as to mistrust the mercy of God, and to fall into the contrary fault, which is *despair*. For, though it be true, that sin is the saddest slavery in the world; yet it must not break and sink men's spirits, and make them so base and servile, as to deprive them of that courage necessary to rescue themselves from it: For, as long custom and continuance in sin deprives us of our strength; so it discourageth our hopes, both of God's grace and assistance, and of his mercy and forgiveness. But, when this despair is the effect of religious melancholy, which is frequently an indisposition of body; then there is no such reason to be cast down. For, when men complain of want of improvement under the exercise of religious duties, and want of a fervent zeal and love towards God; only because they want warmth and affection in the performance of their duty, which duty they nevertheless do perform sincerely and carefully; then there is no just ground for trouble of mind, upon that account: but they must be taught to comfort themselves by considering, that the different degrees of affection, with which different persons serve God, depend much more upon the accidental difference of the constitutions of body, than any true measure of the goodness of their minds; that in one and the same person there will unavoidably be different degrees of affection at different times, according to the present temper of his body, the order or disorder of his spirits, the natural passions and commo-

tions of his mind, without any real change in his moral dispositions; and that no man can at all times keep up an equal vigour of mind. Or, if, after his best endeavours in the course of a virtuous life, a man cannot yet find in himself that passionate love of the supreme God, which he finds some writers have described in an unintelligible manner; this is no just ground of uneasiness at all; for whoever sincerely obeys the commandments of God in the course of a virtuous and religious life, needs no other mark or proof of his love towards him. Or, if it be an apprehension, that possibly they may be excluded from mercy, by some positive decree and foreappointment of God; this is absolutely contrary to all our natural notions of the divine attributes, to conceive that the infinitely merciful and good God should, for his own pleasure, and not for any wickedness of theirs, eternally decree any of his creatures to be miserable: Neither in scripture indeed is there any foundation for any such apprehension, whatever there may be in the writings of some unskilful interpreters. Nor can there be any just reason of despair, even to those, whose minds are troubled at the remembrance of past sins: for though they be, and ought to be, in such trouble of mind, as nothing but effectual repentance and amendment can remove; yet, when amendment has really taken place, then the sorrow for what is past may reasonably be relieved by the assurance of pardon. For, though the great and principal promise of pardon be made indeed to unbelievers, at their conversion and being baptised; yet there is also sufficient encouragement given, even to relapsing sinners to repent. The despair then we condemn. is a disorder which consists in a settled rooted persuasion that we shall never obtain mercy, let us do what ever we can; for it is no temper or state of mind worthy of blame, to despair of mercy while we continue in sin. But,

The hope we have in God, through Christ Jesus, is a remedy against this sin: for, as by despair, the devil would persuade a sinner he can never obtain mercy; so does God give a certain hope of eternal glory, to all that will seek for mercy by sincere repentance and obedience through Jesus Christ. How then can a rational crea-

ture give up his reason so far, as to give himself up for lost; when the God that made him, and is to reward or punish him, doth promise his mercy to as many, as will change their evil course of life and walk in his ways? Yet, we must not stop here: For,

IV. *Of the love of God.*

A *third* duty to God is Love. Now to love God, is to possess our minds with such a due sense and estimation of the excellencies and perfections, which are in the divine nature, as may make us look upon God as our chief good; make choice of him as the only proper object of our happiness; and prefer his cause and interest before any thing else, which may come in competition with it. Therefore, our Saviour expressly declares it, as the first and great commandment; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind;* that is, we are to serve God with all those faculties, which he has given us: Not, that the love of God is to be exclusive of all other loves, but of all other rival affections; that, whenever, the love of God and that of the world come in competition, the former undoubtedly ought to take place of the latter. To love the Lord with all our heart, signifies to love him with all sincerity, with an undissembled affection. To love God, is not merely to do what he commands; but it is to do it, because he commands it. To love God with all our soul, signifies to serve him with the whole soul, with an unreserved obedience. God is not to share a divided affection in our breast, an affection divided between piety and sin; but he is to reign unrivalled by any darling vice. To love God then with all our soul, is the same, as to have respect unto all his commandments. To love the Lord with all our strength, is to put forth the active powers of the soul, in loving and serving him: It is, to rouse ourselves from all supineness and listless idleness: It is, to quicken the wheels and springs of action, which moved on heavily before: It is, to do well without being weary of well-doing: It is to lay out our endeavours, that we

may have a competent sense to discern, a sincere inclination to embrace, and a steady resolution to hold fast, what is best and most pleasing to the deity. In fine,

We must love God sincerely and affectionately; we must desire to please him and to perform his will; we must desire to be made acceptable to him, and to become partakers of his favour and rewards, rather than of the unreasonable pleasures of unrighteousness; because all the reasons, for the loving any object or thing in the world, do more forcibly recommend to us the love of God. He is in himself most excellent, fit to be our chief happiness, and hath actually shew himself our best friend: He has annexed a present, as well as a future reward, to a good life; and has so interwoven our duty and happiness together, that while we are discharging our obligations to the one, we are at the same time making provision for the other: upon all which accounts our best love is due to him.

God's excellency. His goodness and excellency tarnish all the beauty and excellence of creatures There is none good, but one, that is God; because he is good in such a sense, as none can be acknowledged good besides. He alone is perfectly, originally, necessarily, and unchangeably good: He has every excellence in the highest degree; almighty power, unerring wisdom, infinite goodness, unblemished truth, spotless holiness; every thing fit to raise the wonder, and engage the delight, of men and angels; and his glory shines out, in the works of creation and providence. Power and wisdom may command dread and admiration; yet nothing but goodnesss can challenge our love and affection. He gave us our beings, and in the whole course of our lives, his goodness prevents numberless evils from falling upon us; which, with all our reason and understanding, we could by no means either prevent or avoid: And when we were fallen from that happiness, for which we were at first designed, he was pleased to restore us to a new capacity of it, by sending his only Son into the world to die,

for us; the benefits of whose death and passion no man can lose, but by his own fault. He has endued us with reason and natural conscience, to distinguish between good and evil, and to forewarn us of the certainty of a future judgment: He has confirmed this natural conscience, with the additional help of an express revelation: and, that sinners may (if possible) be brought to repentance, he, with much long-suffering and forbearance, defers their punishment; and if they do repent, he forgives and pardons them, as a father receives a returning child. Again, we cannot but love him, who is good, and does us good.

And if God vouchsafe to love us, we must also shew our love to him, by first desiring to please him, and also by a desire to enjoy him: For the first token of any one's love is the doing, what is thought most acceptable to the person loved; so that a true love of God will shew itself first in keeping his commandments. For that is its description by St. John; and where this token is wanting, there can be no love of God. So that, if any one continue in a wilful breach of many, nay, but of any one command of his, he is deceived; in thinking that the love of God abideth in him: Because as the excellency and kindness of God is most transcendent; so our love of him must be most fervent, and preferable to every other thing. If our love of God be sincere, we shall entertain high and admiring thoughts of him according to those discoveries, which he hath made of himself: we shall reverence him, as the most perfect being; and give him the glory of his excellencies, as we turn our thoughts either to the works of nature in the creation, or to the wonders of grace in our redemption, or to the prospect of glory in the world to come. If we act in concert with that being, whose tender mercy is over all his works, by shewing mercy (as far as we can) in all ours: If we conscientiously endeavour to discharge all the duties he has enjoined us, without reluctance; and to submit to all his dispensations, without murmuring: If we address ourselves to him with that holy fear, which awes the turbulent passions into

composure; but does not depress the spirit, or beget an abject and unmanly way of thinking: If we, who look (or ought to look) up to him with reverence as the great judge and lawgiver of the universe, chiefly delight to consider him under the endearing characters of a Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Benefactor. If, before we compose ourselves to sleep, we recommend ourselves to his almighty care, who neither slumbers nor sleeps: if, as soon as we rise, we recommend ourselves to his superintendency, who maketh his sun to rise upon the just and unjust; humbly desiring, that, as that sun dispels the darkness and unwholesome vapours of the night; so he the great sun of righteousness who arose with healing in his wings, would drive from us all evil; all evil, whether of mind, body, or estate: if we commit all our concerns in general to his providence and fatherly goodness; and upon every extraordinary emergency, make a more particular application to him for his direction, who never faileth them that seek him. These undoubtedly are the only genuine tests and significant expressions, of an undissembled love to God; and they will procure for us the blessed effect of that infinite love, which being stronger than death, disarmed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory: And such a soul will say, 'I see that God alone can be my portion; in his favour is my life; without that, though I had all the 'world, I should be destitute and miserable.' This love arises from the sense of benefits received: It is like the filial love of a dutiful child to a tender and indulgent parent, upon a review of his care and kindness, in preserving him, providing for him, doing him all the good that lies in his power; which engages him, to study to requite his parents in the best manner he can. Such is the love of God found in a pious soul. And therefore,

Who live in this love. Let those, who (though they really love, and fear, and serve God, in the course of a virtuous and religious life; yet, because they feel not in themselves that warmth of affection, to which many enthusiasts pretend) are afraid and suspect, that

they do not love God sincerely as they ought; be corrected, by considering, that there is no other mark so infallible of the goodness of a Tree, as the fruit which it brings forth. It is not a religious mood or humour, but a religious temper: It is not, to be now and then pleased with our Maker in the gaiety of the heart, when (more properly speaking) we are pleased with ourselves: It is not, to have a few occasional transient acts of complacency and delight in the Lord rising in our minds, when we are in a vein of good humour: But it is to have a lasting, habitual, and determinate resolution to please the Deity, rooted and grounded in our hearts, and influencing our actions throughout. If they live in obedience to the commands of God, they need no other evidence of the sincerity of their hearts towards him: for all other signs may possibly be erroneous; but this is the very thing itself signified. Love of goodness, righteousness, and truth, is love of God: for God is goodness and truth; and he who loves these virtues, which are the moral perfections of the divine nature, does therefore love God most perfectly; because he loves those excellencies, for the sake of which God expects that we should love him above all things.

The other fruit of love is the desire of enjoying: this is the case of all men. They desire the company of those they love: so he that sincerely loves God, will not only be constant in prayer, meditation, hearing his word, and receiving the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper, with cheerfulness and devotion; but will earnestly wish to be dissolved, and to be with Christ in the glory of God the Father; with an entire resignation of this world and all its enjoyments, to God's will and pleasure.

SUNDAY I.—Part II.

V. *Of the Fear of God.*

The *Fourth* duty to God is Fear. Though love casteth out all servile fear, yet it does not exclude such

a fear as a dutiful son shews to a very affectionate, but a very wise and prudent father: and we may rejoice in God with reverence, as well as serve him with gladness: For love, if not allayed and tempered with fear, and the apprehensions of divine justice, would betray the soul into a sanguine confidence and an ill grounded security; Fear, on the other hand, if not sweetened and animated by love, would sink the mind into a fatal despondency. Therefore fear is placed in the soul, as a counterpoise to the more enlarged, kindly, and generous affections. There are two bridles or restraints, which God hath put upon human nature, *shame* and *fear*. *Shame* is the weaker, and hath place only in those, in whom there are some remains of virtue: *Fear* is the stronger, and works upon all, who love themselves, and desire their own preservation. Therefore in this degenerate state of mankind, Fear is that passion, which hath the greatest power over us, and by which God and his laws take the surest hold of us: our desire, and love, and hope, are not so apt to be wrought upon, by the representation of virtue, and the promises of reward and happiness; as our fear is, from the apprehensions of divine displeasure: For, though we have lost in a great measure the relish of true happiness, yet we still retain a quick sense of pain and misery. So that fear is grounded on a natural love of ourselves, and is interwoven with a necessary desire of our own preservation: And therefore religion usually makes its first entrance into us, by this passion. Hence perhaps it is, that *Solomon*, more than once, calls the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom.

To fear God, is to have such a due sense of his majesty, and holiness, and justice, and goodness, as shall make us not dare to offend him: for each of these attributes is proper to raise a suitable fear, in every considering mind: his *majesty*, a fear, lest we affront it by being irreverent; his *holiness*, a fear, lest we offend it by being carnal; his *justice*, a fear, lest we provoke it by being presumptuous; and his *goodness*, a fear, lest we forfeit it by being unthankful. So that

this fear of God is not the superstitious dread of an arbitrary or cruel being; but that awe and regard, which necessarily arises in the mind of every man, who believes and habitually considers himself as living and acting in the sight of an omnipotent Governor, of perfect justice, holiness, and purity; who sees every thought, as well as every action; who cannot be imposed upon by any hypocrisy; who, as certainly as there is any difference between good and evil, cannot but approve the one and detest the other; and whose government consists, in rewarding what he approves, and punishing what he hates. This fear of God is the foundation of religion: For, the great support of virtue among men is the sense upon their minds, of a supreme Governor and Judge of the universe, who will finally and effectually reward what is in itself essentially worthy of reward, and punish what is worthy of punishment: And consequently fear brings us into subjection to God's authority, and enforces the practice of our duty; for, the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil. Yet

The folly of fearing men more than God. It may with sorrow be observed, that the fear of men, or a dread not to provoke them, is too often stronger than the fear of God; though God be infinitely more to be dreaded than man: Which is the lesson we are taught by Christ himself; who says, Fear not them, which can kill the body; that is, fear not men so much as God; fear him infinitely more. It is very lawful for us to fear men, and to stand in awe of their power: because they can kill the body; and death is terrible: but, when the power of man comes in competition with omnipotency; and what man can do to the body in this world, with what God can do to the body and soul in the other; there is no comparison between the terror of the one and the other. God can do all, that man can do: He can kill the body, and that by an immediate act of his divine power: He can blast our reputation, ruin our estate, and afflict our bodies with the sharpest pains, and smite us with death. And God doth all that with ease, which men many times

do with labour: they use the utmost of their wit and power, to do us mischief; but God can do all things by a word: if he do but speak, judgments come; we are but a little dust, and the least breath of God can disperse it: he hath all creatures at his command, ready to execute his will: So that whatever man, or any creatures, can do; that God can do also, and infinitely more. His power is not confined to the body, but he hath power over the spirit: He can make body and soul miserable, not only in this world, but in the other also; and that, not only for a few years, but for all eternity. Therefor[illegible]

The fear of men will not be a sufficient plea and excuse for men; it will not be enough to say, 'This 'I was awed into by the apprehension of danger, or 'by the fear of sufferings; Or, that I chose rather to 'trust God with my soul, than men with my estate; 'to save my life, I renounced my religion, was asham-'ed of Christ, and denied him before men.' Though our Saviour has told us plainly, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with his Holy angels.* Thus they, who out of fear of men offend God, are guilty of this folly; they incur the danger of a greater evil: for, whilst they are endeavouring to escape the hands of men that shall die, they fall into the hands of the living God. Do we fear the wrath of man, whose breath is in his nostrils; who can but afflict a little, and for a little while? And is not the wrath of the eternal God much more dreadful? For, as we are sinners, our fear is justly encreased from the holiness of his nature, the justice of his government, and the threatnings of his laws. But, to conclude: as our offences respect men, it is possible we may transgress against them, and they not know it: one may steal his neighbour's goods, or defile his wife; yet keep it so privately, as not to be suspected, and so never to be brought to punishment for it. But this can never be done in regard to God, who knows the most secret thoughts of our hearts; and consequently,

though we sin ever so privately, he is sure to find us out; and will as surely, except we repent in time, punish us for it eternally.

VI. *Of Trust in God.*

A *fifth* duty to God is that of TRUST: For, the homage due to God in all our wants and dangers, is to trust in him; whereby we declare our constant dependance upon God for the relief of all our wants and dangers; whether spiritual or temporal, and to support us under all afflictions and temptations; founded upon a persuasion of his all-sufficiency, and of his inviolable faithfulness to perform his word and engagements. As far as I trust a man, I suppose him able to do what I trust him for; that he hath given me some encouragement to believe his willingness, and that he will not deceive me: and it must be so, in any regular trust in God, who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think. But then it is of the utmost concern to us, that we have no expectation from God for things which he hath never promised. Where he has been pleased, positively to declare what he will do, we should firmly depend, whatever difficulties or discouragements may lie in the way of our hope: But, where his promises are made with a reserve for his own sovereignty; or the superiority of his divine wisdom; as he knows, far better than we, what is good for man in this life, there we should not allow ourselves to be positive in our expectations of particular events, but cast our care upon him in a more general manner; relying upon this, that, in the way of duty, he will do that, which (upon the whole) is best for us to be done.

In all conditions that befall us, we must repose ourselves upon God in confidence of his support and deliverance, of his care and providence, to prevent and divert the evils we fear, whether spiritual or temporal; or of his gracious help, to bear us up under them; and of his mercy and goodness, to deliver us from them, when he sees best; provided always we be careful to do our

own duty to him. *Every man who believes thus of God (as every man must do, who believes there is a God) will first apply himself to God, and beseech him with all earnestness and importunity, that he would permit him to refer his affairs to him, and be pleased to undertake the care of them; and he will, without any demur or difficulty give up himself wholly to him, to guide and govern him, and to dispose of him as to him should seem best. Therefore, if God hath prevented us herein, and without our desire taken this care upon himself; we ought to rejoice in it, as the greatest happiness which could possibly have befallen us; and we should, without any further care and anxiety, using our own best diligence, and studying to please him, cheerfully leave ourselves in his hands: with the greatest confidence and security, that he will do all that for us, which is really best; and with a firm persuasion, that the condition and circumstances of life, which he shall chuse for us, will be the very same, which we would chuse for ourselves, were we endued with the same wisdom. Therefore let it be considered, how great a mischief we frequently do ourselves, by loading our minds with a multitude of vexatious and tormenting cares, when we may so securely cast our burthen upon God: And let us earnestly beg of God, that his watchful and merciful providence would undertake the care of us: that he would fit and prepare us for every condition into which he hath designed to bring us; and that he would teach us, to demean ourselves in it, as we ought: That he would consider our frailties; and lay no greater load of affliction upon us, than he will give us grace and strength to bear: That, if he sees it good, to exercise any of us with afflictions and sufferings in any kind; he would make us able to stand in that evil day: and, when we have done all, to stand.

And let us be sure, to keep within the bounds of our duty; trying no unlawful ways, for our ease and preservation, and for our rescue from the evils which we fear and lie under: For we may assure ourselves, that God is never more concerned to appear for us; than when

* *See* Christian *Fortitude* and *Patience* in *Sunday* 16. Sect. 5.

out of conscience of our duty to him, we are contented, rather to suffer, than work our deliverance by undue means. Let us commit ourselves to him, in well doing; and do nothing (no, not for the cause of religion) which is contrary to the plain rules and precepts of it. Should we (instead of vain murmurings and complaints, and terrifying ourselves with fears of what may never happen) follow the example of holy David, betake ourselves to prayer, and by this means engage the providence of God, for our protection from evil, or for our support under it; we should certainly do much better ourselves; and contribute much more, than we can do any other way, to the prevention of any evil we can fear, or to the mitigating or shortening of it, as to God's infinite wisdom and goodness shall seem best. To this we are directed by St. Peter, when he exhorts us to cast all our care upon God, who careth for us; according to what he had been taught by our Saviour Christ, who in his divine sermon on the mount says: *Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment! Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? and why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought; saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be cloathed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take*

thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Matt. vi. 25, &c.

How we must trust in God. That is to say; not, that we are to live at random, secure and careless of whatever may befall us: not, that we are to look into the consequences of our own or other men's actions, and not to endeavour any ways to foresee and prevent approaching dangers: not that we are to make no manner of provision for future events; to lay up nothing, and concern ourselves about nothing, but what is present and immediately before us: doubtless, sagacity in discerning and a prudent forecast towards inclining evils, are not only allowable, but commendable qualities; frugality and diligence are certainly virtues: but our Saviour's meaning plainly is, to forbid such a care and concern for future accidents, as is attended with uneasiness, distrust and despondency; such a degree of thoughtfulness, as takes up, dejects, and distracts the mind. We are not to pry too curiously into the remote issues of things, nor perplex and afflict ourselves with the forethought of imagined dangers: we are not to guard against want, by an eager anxious pursuit of wealth; nor be so careful in providing supplies for the necessities of this life, as to forget that we are designed for another: it is very unreasonable, to disquiet ourselves about distant evils; it often happening, that the presence of the things themselves suggests better expedients, wiser and quicker councils to us, than all our wisdom and forethought at a distance can do. The morrow (says our Lord) shall take thought, for the things of itself; that is, it shall bring along with it a power and strength of mind, answerable to its necessities; a frame of spirit, every way suited to our circumstances and occasions.

He, who terrifies himself with the apprehension of future evils, declares in effect, that he doth not absolutely rely upon God for his ordering and disposing them: and he who doth not absolutely trust God with all his concerns has no right to his protection and defence, no reason to expect his support and assistance; but is left, to work out every thing as well as he can, by the dint of second causes, by his own parts, policy, and prudence.

But, how wretched is the case of him, who has brought his affairs to such a pass, as to be deprived of his best and faithfullest counsellor, his most kind and most potent friend; and to live, as it were, without God in the world? It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God: and surely, next to that, it is a fearful thing, to take ourselves out of his hands, and exempt ourselves from his care; which he is justly supposed to do, who sets himself (with any degree of solicitude) to take thought for the morrow.

Let us not, therefore, by our rashness and folly, provoke trouble and danger, and bring them upon ourselves: Let us, according to our Saviour's counsel, be *wise as serpents*, and *innocent as doves:* Let us use that care and prudence, which is consistent with innocence and a good conscience; and, when we have done that, let us be no farther solicitous, but resign ourselves and all our cares, to the good pleasure of God, and to the disposal of his wise providence; and leave it to him, who made the world, to govern it: for no doubt, he understands it much better than we.

The sinfulness of fortune-telling, &c. Here, it cannot be improper to remark, that the vain desire of knowing beforehand things to come, is such a desire of the knowledge of secret things, as is not consistent with our trust in God; neither is it permitted us, by the present circumstances and condition of our nature. It is also very observable, that those who have least knowledge of God, and least trust in his promises, and least understanding; have always the greatest confidence in groundless pretences and unwarrantable methods of pursuing knowledge. But to pretend to know things by the stars, introduces fatality, destroys religion, and is a distrust of the Almighty: witchcraft, fortune-telling, and all unlawful arts, either real or pretended, when ever they have any reality in them, are evidently diabolical; and when, they have no reality, they are cheats and lying impostures; the works of him, who was a liar from the beginning. Let me therefore exhort you, in the words of St. Paul: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.* Phil. iv. 6.

VII. *Of Humility or submission to God in respect of obedience.*

A *sixth* duty to God is HUMILITY; that lowliness of mind, which begets an entire resignation to the will of God, and a dependance upon him in all dangers which relate either to our bodies or souls: a disposition, arising from the true knowledge of ourselves, and a sense of our own weak and sinful condition; in consequence of which, we take to ourselves the shame and confusion, due to our follies; and give to God the glory, of all the good we receive, or are able to do. He, who desires to be truly humble, and clothed with humility; must do nothing, on purpose to draw the eyes and good opinion of men, but purely to please God; he must receive from the hands of God all afflictions and trials, without murmuring against his justice: so that the submission of a christian consists in a firm persuasion of mind, that nothing happens to us, but by the will and permission of God; and that we never presume too much upon the best of our works: for all our righteousness is as filthy rags; so that, when we have done all those things which are commanded, we are no better than unprofitable servants. Again, it consists in our being persuaded, that he loves us better than we do ourselves, and knows the best methods of making us happy. Such a submission as this, will make us easy under the greatest afflictions: and, though God should visit us with the most intolerable disappointments and losses in this world, it will either stop our mouths against providence, because it is the work of God; or, it will enable us with courage to receive them, with the resignation of good old Eli: *It is the Lord; let him do, what seemeth good to him.*

Thankfulness for God's corrections. Therefore, when ever he strikes with the rod of correction, we must not only bear it, because we cannot avoid it; but to our patience should add our thanks; for that we, having highly provoked his goodness, are not by

his justice given over to our own hearts lusts, but are still preserved under the wings of his mercy: and this should be so far from causing us to repine against God, that it should raise in us an immediate reformation, repentance, confession, contrition, and full purposes of amendment with satisfaction. Some of the greatest afflictions and calamities of life are not always real and positive inflictions of judgments from the hand of God, but merely the original differences of men's state and circumstances; the variety of God's creation, the different talents committed to men's charge, the different stations God has placed men in, for their various trials, and in order to the exercise of a diversity of duties. The like may be said, of want of honour and power, want of children to succeed in our estates and families, weakness of body, shortness of life, and the like; nay, and even of spiritual disadvantages themselves likewise; want of capacity and good understanding, want of knowledge and instruction, want of many opportunities and means of improvement, which others enjoy.

Submission to his wisdom in his commands. None of these can be any just ground, of complaint against God; or any reason, why we should not with all satisfaction acquiesce in his divine good pleasure; since all these things are only different distributions of such free gifts, as he, not being obliged to bestow on any man, may therefore without controversy, divide to every man in what measure and proportion he thinks fit: only this we may depend upon; that in such measure only he will exact our duty, as he enables us to perform it; and that to whom little is given, of him shall not be much required: and this brings all the seeming inequalities in the world, to a real equality at last.

In all circumstances of life therefore, we are not to be uneasy, that God has made us inferior to others; or that he has set before us greater hardships and difficulties to go through; or that he has given us less abilities, and fewer opportunities, than others: but we are to apply ourselves wholly, with all resignation, to the proper duties of that station or of those circumstances,

wherein God has been pleased to place us. Even poverty is not an occasion of envying the rich; but a strong obligation, to study the duties of humility, contentment, and resignation: neither is ignorance and want of capacity, meanness of parts and want of instruction, a reason to murmur, that God has not entrusted us with more talents; but an admonition, to take care that we make a right improvement of those few which are given us. Weakness of body is not a just occasion to repine against God, for not giving us strength and health wherewith he has blessed some others; but a continual argument to us, to exercise and improve such virtues, as are more peculiar to the mind. Lastly, the consideration, of the uncertainty and shortness of life itself, ought not to make us spend our time in fruitless complaints of the vanity and meanness of our state; but to cause us perpetually to consider, that it is not of so great importance, how long we live, as how well: and it ought to be a sufficient satisfaction to truly pious and religious persons, that God has reserved for them their portion in another life. Therefore we should be content in every state and condition of life, let whatever befal us; how contrary soever to our own inclinations, and how much soever, they contradict those proposals of happiness and enjoyment, which we have framed within our own breasts.

How humility is perfected. Both which parts of christian humility are perfected, by a contempt of the world: and the contempt of the world is shewn, by looking upon the best of our works to be full of infirmity and pollution; and on all worldly enjoyments as little and inconsiderable, in comparison of the purity and perfection of God, and that happiness, which God hath prepared for those that love him: by being content with the portion of the good things of this life, which the wise providence of God hath allotted to our share; without purchasing the enjoyment of them, by the committing of any wilful sin; without being anxiously concerned for the increase of them, or extremely depressed when they make themselves wings and fly away: by a mo-

derate use of all those lawful pleasures, which relate to the gratification of our senses and fleshly appetites; as become persons, who expect their portion, not in the pleasures of this world, but in the happiness of the next: by a low esteem of riches and honour; so that we be ready to forsake them, whenever they come in competition with the performance of our duty to God: by bearing the afflictions and calamities of this life, with patience and constancy; and by looking unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of our faith.

Which humble, resigned, and depending frame of mind is the proper disposition for devotion, the parent, of religious fear, and the seed-plot of all christian virtues. It makes us ready to receive the revelations of God's will to mankind, and as careful to practice what he enjoins: It restrains the immoderate desire of honour, by teaching us not to exalt ourselves, nor do any thing through strife or vain glory: It opposes self-love which is planted in our nature; and when indulged, will be too apt to deceive us in the judgment we form concerning ourselves: It also makes us ready, to believe what God reveals, and to pay our due obedience to him, from the sense of our own meanness and his excellency: and, by removing the great hindrance of our faith, which is a vanity to distinguish ourselves from the unthinking croud; it makes us put our hope and confidence in God because being weak and miserable of ourselves, without him we can do nothing. It encreases our love to God, by making us sensible how unworthy we are of the many favours we receive from him: It teaches us, to rejoice in the prosperity of our neighbour, by infusing the most favourable opinion of his worth: It disposes us, to relieve those wants, and compassionate those afflictions, which we ourselves have deserved: It makes us patient under all the troubles and calamities of life; because we have provoked God by our sins: and therefore, neither prayers nor fasts will find acceptance, unless they proceed from an humble mind; and our best works will stand us in little stead, if they be stained with pride and boasting of our own strength.

SUNDAY II.

I. *Of the* honour *due to* God, *in his house or church.* II. *By reverencing and maintaining his ministers.* III. *By keeping the* Lord's day. IV. *By observing the* feasts, *and* V. fasts *of the church; whether public, private, or the fast of* Lent. VI. *in his word, the holy* scriptures *or rule of faith; by catechising and preaching.* VII. *In his* sacraments; *by receiving* baptism *and performing the* vows *and obligations thereof.*

I. *Of the honour due to God in his house.*

A *Seventh* duty to God is Honour. As honour is a duty, which in the nature of things is owing to those in a superior relation to us: and as the very notion of it implies it being due to such; by how much God is infinitely greater, than those whom we acknowledge to be our superiors upon earth, by so much ought we to have a profounder regard, and veneration for him. They honour God, who serve him in spirit and in truth, in all the ways of his appointed worship, and due obedience to his laws: which command us, not only to pay this honour immediately to himself, but to have a due esteem for his *house*, his *ministers*, his *day*, his *word*, his *sacraments*, and his *name*; as things which nearly relate or belong to him.

First, we must honour God in his *house*, that is, in the church; so called on account of its peculiar relation to him, being solemnly dedicated and set apart for his public worship and service; and on account of God's peculiar presence, in the administration of his word and sacraments. The dedication of it to sacred uses makes it properly his own; and the praying to him, praising him, and celebrating the holy mysteries, according to his appointment, are demonstrations of his peculiar presence. Consequently we ought to rever-

ence God's house, by furnishing it with all decency for the worship of God; by repairing and adoring it; by keeping it from profane and common use, and applying it wholly to the business of religion; by offering up our prayers in it, with fervour and frequency; by hearing God's word, with attention and resolutions of obeying it; by celebrating the holy mysteries with humility and devotion; and by using all such outward testimonies of respect, as the church enjoins, and as are established by the custom of the age we live in, as marks of honour and reverence. This bodily worship is recommended by Solomon, when he charges us, to look to our feet, when we go to the house of God.

Directions for our behaviour at Church. This will correct any whispering or talking about worldly affairs, any negligent or light carriage; and will suppress any provocations to laughter, or any critical or nice observation of others: And, on the contrary, it will excite in us a sincere intention of gloryfying God, and making his honour and praise known among men; acknowledging hereby our entire dependance upon his bounty, both for what we enjoy, and what we farther expect. It will promote hearty endeavours of performing his blessed will, and of being that in our lives and actions, which we beg to be made in our prayers; It will teach us to govern our outward behavior by such measures, as the church prescribes; *viz.* to kneel, stand, bow, or sit, as the rubrick hath enjoined to be complied with in public: all which different postures we ought to use with such gravity and seriousness, as may shew, how intent we are on the worship of God; yet avoiding such behaviour, as may be apt to disturb those near us, and to give occasion to others, to suspect us of acting a formal, hypocritical part.

If we come to church before the service begins, which we should always endeavour to do; after we have performed our private devotions, we should in silence recollect ourselves, and by serious thoughts dispose our minds to a due discharge of the ensuing duties: for, the discoursing about news and business is improper upon such occasions, God's house being never designed for

the carrying on of worldly concerns. But it is still more unbecoming, while we are at our prayers, to observe those rules of ceremony, which in other places are fit to be practised towards one another; because, when we are offering our requests to the great God of heaven and earth, our attention should be so fixed, that we should have no leisure to regard any thing else. To this end, when we put our bodies into a praying posture, with which I think leaning and lolling seem very inconsistent, we should do well to fix our eyes downward, that we may not be diverted by any objects near us; and, at the same time resolve, not to suffer them to gaze about, whereby they do but fetch in matter for wandering thoughts. This attention will be much improved by silence: therefore we should never pray aloud with the minister, but where it is enjoined, endeavouring to make his prayer our own by a hearty *Amen*. Great care must be taken not to repeat after the minister, what peculiarly relates to his office: This I mention the rather, because I have frequently observed some devout people following him, that officiates, in the exhortation and absolution, as well as the confession; which, if thoroughly considered, must be judged a very absurd and improper expression of the people's devotion, because those are distinguishing parts of the priest's office. Therefore the best preparation of mind for our joining in the public prayers, is, to abstract our thoughts (as much as we can) from worldly business and concerns, that we may call upon God with attention and application of soul: to keep our passions in order and subjection, that none of them may interrupt us, when we approach the throne of grace: to possess our minds with such an awful sense of God's presence, that we may behave ourselves with gravity and reverence: to work in ourselves such a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency, as may make us earnest for the supplies of divine grace; such a sorrow for our sins, such humiliation for them, and such a readiness to forgive others, as may prevail upon God, for the sake of Christ's suffering, to forgive us: to recollect those many blessings, which we have received; that we may shew

forth his praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to his service.

II. *Of reverencing God and his House.*

Secondly, the Almighty is also to be honoured in his *ministers*; by that love, which is due unto them, as the stewards of the mysteries of God, and those who watch over our souls. Therefore we ought to shew our love to such as administer to us in holy things; in being ready to assist them in all difficulties, and in vindicating their reputations from those aspersions, which bad men are apt to load them with: in covering their real infirmities, and interpreting all their actions in the best sense; never picking out the faults of a few, and making them a reproach to the whole sacred order. And as ministers are in a peculiar manner, servants of the great God of heaven and earth, to whose bounty we owe all of that we enjoy; therefore we should dedicate a part of what we receive to his immediate service, as an acknowledgment of his sovereignty and dominion over all. What makes this duty further reasonable is, that in order to be instruments in God's hand of procuring our eternal welfare, they renounce all ordinary means of advancing their fortunes: they surrender their pretensions to worldly interests: and therefore it is highly fit, that their laborious and difficult employment, purely for God's glory and our salvation, should receive from us the encouragement of a comfortable and honourable subsistence, upon this and the like considerations: That parents may be encouraged, to devote their children of good parts to the service of the altar; for it is not probable, they will sacrifice an expensive education to an employment which is attended with small advantages. And, if some persons have zeal enough, to engage in the ministry without a respect to the rewards of it; yet common prudence ought to put us upon such methods, as are most likely to excite men of the best parts and ability to undertake the sacred function; that the best cause may have the best management, and the purest religion the ablest defenders. It is also necessary, their maintenance bear

some proportion to the dignity of their character, and raise them above the contempt of those, who are too apt to be influenced by outward appearances; for, though wisdom be better than strength, nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. They should also be enabled, not only to provide for their families; which is a duty incumbent upon them, as well as the rest of mankind; but to be examples to their flock in charity and in doing good, as well as in all other parts of their office and duty.

III. *Of the times for the service of God.*

A *third* thing, whereby we are to shew our honour to God, is to keep holy the *sabbath day*, and all other times set apart for his service: for as God expects a part of our goods for the maintenance of the settled ministry in his church; so he requires us, to honour and express our reverence towards him, by dedicating a particular part of our time to his immediate service. *Remember*, says he, *that thou keep holy the sabbath-day.*

Sabbath, why instituted. The ends, for which the sabbath was originally instituted, and for which the command was from time to time renewed, were principally as follow: That men might continually commemorate the works of creation; which original reason of the institution of the sabbath is of eternal and unchangeable consideration. Another reason of this commandment, is, that the poor labourer, and the servant, and even the cattle may have a time of rest: This reason likewise, as well as that of commemorating the creation, is of a moral and perpetual nature. A third reason, which was added upon occasion of renewing this institution to the Jews, was; that they might commemorate their deliverance, out of the land of Egypt, which to that people was as it were a new creation: And because it was a manifest contempt of this great deliverance and a presumptuously wilful despising of a plain command of God; the man in the wilderness, who did but gather sticks upon the sabbath-day, was, by God's especial direction, commanded to be put to death: and, as the moral part of the

commandment concerning the sabbath is of perpetual obligation: so the ritual or instituted part, which had relation to the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt, is abolished by the gospel. But then, instead of the Jewish sabbath, there succeeded, by the appointment and practice of the apostles, the commemoration of our Lord's resurrection: which coming to pass upon the first day of the week, the christian Lord's day was accordingly from thenceforth kept on the first day of the week, which we call *Sunday*. Therefore one day in seven must be yielded unto the Lord, and set apart for the exercise of religious duties, both in public and private.

How to be kept. We must not only rest, from the works of our calling, but our time must be employed in all such religious exercises, as tend to the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls. We must regularly frequent the worship of God in the public assemblies, from which nothing but sickness or absolute necessity should detain us: and there, we are not to talk, or gaze about us: but to join the prayers of the church, hear his most holy word, receive the blessed sacrament, when administered; and contribute to the relief of the poor, if there be any collection for their support: that we may thereby openly profess ourselves christians, which is one great end of public assemblies in the service of God. We ought in private to enlarge our ordinary devotions, and to make the subject of them chiefly to consist in thanksgivings for the works of creation and redemption; recollecting all those mercies we have received from the bounty of heaven, through the course of our lives: to improve our knowledge, by reading and meditating upon divine subjects; to instruct our children and families; to visit the sick and poor, comforting them by some seasonable assistance: and, if we converse with our friends or neighbours, to season our discourse with prudent and profitable hints for the advancement of piety; and to take care, that no sourness or moroseness mingle with our serious frame of mind. In a word, it is to be spent in works of necessity, and in

works of charity; and in whatsoever tends, without superstition and without affectation, to the real honour of God, and to the true interest and promoting of religion and virtue in the world. The extremes to be avoided, are: on the one hand, that habit of spending great part of the Lord's day in gaming, and in other loose and debauched practices; which has to numberless persons been the corruption of their principles, and the entire ruin of their morals: on the other hand, an affected judaical or pharisaical preciseness, which usually proceeds from hypocrisy, or from a want of understanding rightly the true nature of religion.

Its advantages. Hence we may collect the great advantages of a religious observation of the Lord's day: it keepeth up the solemn and public worship of God; which might be neglected, if left to depend upon the will of man: it preserveth the knowledge and visible profession of the christian religion in the world; when, notwithstanding the great differences there are among christians in other matters, they yet all agree in observing this day, in memory of our Saviour's resurrection: and it is highly useful to instruct the ignorant by preaching and catechising, and to put those in mind of their duty, who in their prosperity are apt to forget God. Moreover, by spending this day in religious exercise, we acquire new strength and resolution to perform God's will in our several stations for the future.

IV. *In observing the feasts of the Church.*

Besides this weekly day of the Lord, there are other principal times or days, set apart by the church; either in remembrance of some special mercies of God, such as the birth and resurrection of Christ, the coming down of the Holy Ghost from heaven, &c. or in memory of the blessed apostles, and other saints; who were the happy instruments, of conveying to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus, by preaching his gospel through the world, and most of them attesting the

truth of it with their blood. These ought to be observed in such a manner, as may answer the ends, for which they were first appointed: that God may be glorified by an humble and grateful acknowledgment of his mercies: and that the salvation of our souls may be advanced, by believing the mysteries of our redemption, and imitating the examples of those primitive paterns of piety set before us. Therefore, on these days, we should be so far from looking upon them as common days, or making them instruments of vice and vanity; or spending them in luxury and debauchery, intemperance, excess, and sensuality: as the manner of some is, who look upon an *holy-day*, as designed for a loose to their passions and unbounded pleasures; that our greatest care should be, to improve our time in the knowledge and love of God, and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord; by constantly attending the public worship, and partaking of the blessed sacrament, if it be administered; and in private, by enlarging our devotions, and withdrawing ourselves (as much as possible) from the affairs of the world; particularly expressing our rejoicing by love and charity to our poor neighbour. If the holy-day be such, as is intended for our calling to mind any mystery of our redemption, or article of our faith; we ought to confirm our belief of it, by considering all those reasons, upon which it is built; that we may be able, to give a good account of the hope which is in us. We should, from our hearts, offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and resolve to perform all those duties, which arise from the belief of such an article. If we commemorate any saint, we should consider the virtues, for which he was most distinguished, and by what steps he arrived at so great perfection: and then examine ourselves, how far we are wanting in our duty; and earnestly beg God's pardon for our past failings, and his grace to enable us to conform our lives to those admirable examples, which the saints have left for our imitation.

V. *In observing the fasts of the church.*

As we are thus to express our thankfulness to God, for mercies received, and for the good examples set before us for our imitation; we are, with the same view of honouring God, by acts of humiliation and repentance, to keep holy those *fast-days*, set apart by the church, or by civil authority, or by our own appointment, to humble ourselves before God, in punishing our bodies, and afflicting our souls, in order to a real repentance: by outward tokens testifying our grief for sins past, and using them as a means to secure us from returning to those sins, of which we express so great a detestation. And this must be done, not only by interrupting and abridging the care of our bodies, but by carefully inquiring into the state of our souls; charging ourselves with all those transgressions, we have committed against God's laws; humbly confessing them, with shame and confusion of face, with hearty contrition and sorrow for them; praying, that God will not suffer his whole displeasure to arise, and begging him to turn away his anger from us: by interceding also with him for such spiritual and temporal blessings upon ourselves and others as are needful and convenient; by improving our knowledge in all the particulars of our duty, and by relieving the wants and necessities of the poor, that our humiliation and prayers may find acceptance with God. And, if the fast be public, we must attend the public places of God's worship: always taking particular care to avoid all vanity, and valuing ourselves upon such performances: and therefore, in our private fasts, we must not proclaim them to others by any outward shew; that we may not appear unto men to fast. We must not despise or judge our neighbour, who doth not, and it may be he hath not the same reason to tie himself up to such methods. We must not destroy the health of our bodies, by too great austerity; lest thereby we make them unfit instruments, of the improvement of our minds, or the dis-

charge of our worldly employments. Particular care ought to be taken, that we thereby grow not morose and sour, peevish and fretful towards others; to which severity to ourselves may be apt to incline us: for it is so far from expressing our repentance, that it makes fresh work for it by increasing our guilt. Therefore, when thou fastest, be not as the hypocrites are, of a sad countenance, &c. Wherefore,

Of the fast of Lent. The church of Christ having in all ages appointed solemn fasts to be observed by her members upon particular occasions, we still retain some of them; amongst which, the fast of *Lent* deserves our particular regard: concerning which, I would have you make these observations. As to the limitation of time for the keeping of this fast, the church had (I suppose) a respect to the particular space of time, wherein our Savior fasted (which was *forty days*) as what was esteemed a proper penitential season: and, as to the intention, end, or design of this fast of Lent, it is set apart as a proper season for mortification, and the exercise of self-denial; to humble and afflict ourselves for our sins; not by endeavouring to fast continually forty days, but by frequent fastings, as may be learnt from the practice of the church in all ages; to punish our too frequent abuses of God's creatures by abstinence, and by forbearing the lawful enjoyment of them; to form and settle firm purposes of holy obedience; to pray frequently to God, both in private and public, for pardon and his holy spirit; to put us in mind of that sore trial and temptation, which Christ then endured for our sakes; particularly to perpetuate the memory of our Saviour's sufferings; and to make, as it were, a public confession of our belief that he died for our salvation; and consequently, fitting ourselves to receive the tokens and pledges of his love with greater joy and gladness.

For which reason, this christian institution of Lent ought to be spent in fasting, and in abstinence; according to the circumstances of our health, and our outward condition in the world: and this with a design to deny and punish ourselves, and to express our humiliation before God for past transgressions: the ornament of attire

may be laid aside; the frequency of receiving and paying visits may be interrupted: public assemblies for pleasure and diversion should be avoided; our retirements should be filled with reading pious discourses, and with frequent prayer, and with examining the state of our minds: and the public devotion, and those instructing exhortations from the pulpit, which are so generally established in many churches in this season should be constantly attended. Besides, we should be liberal in our alms; and very ready to employ ourselves, on all opportunities of relieving either the temporal or spiritual wants of our neighbour: For the Lord says, by the prophet Isaiah; 'Is not this the fast I have chosen, to loose 'the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, 'and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break ev-'ery yoke? Is it not, to deal thy bread to the hungry; 'and that thou bring the poor, that are cast out, to thine 'house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover 'him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own 'flesh? ch. lviii. ver. 6, 7.

SUNDAY II.—Part II.

VI. *God must be honoured in his word.*

Fourthly; We are in a more special manner to express our reverence to God, by honouring his HOLY WORD: and we honour his holy word, by hearing, reading, and practising, what is therein contained for our comfort and instruction. This word of God is commonly called, by way of eminence, *the Holy Scriptures:* which we are obliged to search; because they contain the terms and conditions of our common salvation; without the knowledge and practice of which, we can never attain eternal happiness; I say, whatever is necessary for us to know and believe, to hope for and practise, in order to salvation, is fully contained in those holy books. This then is the rule of our faith. Every doctrine, which is there delivered, we must believe: but, as for any doctrine, which is not plainly delivered there, and cannot clearly be deduced thence; we are not bound to believe

that, as an article of faith, let it come ever so well recommended. Our church has therefore declared; 'That 'the holy Scripture containeth all things, necessary to 'salvation: so that, whatsoever is not read therein, nor 'may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any 'man; that it should be believed, as an article of faith, 'or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.* In 'the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those 'canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of 'whose authority was never any doubt in the church. 'For, the Old Testament, is not contrary to the New: 'For, both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting 'life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only me-'diator between God and man, being both God and man:' And the things, declared in scripture to be the terms and conditions of salvation, are repentance from all wicked works, and faith towards God and our Lord Jesus Christ; the belief of a resurrection from the dead, and of a judgment to come; and a life of virtue, or suitable obedience to our Lord's express commands in the gospel.

These necessary things are there treated, with so much plainness and clearness; as to be sufficiently understood by those, who make a right use of their reason, and read them with the respect and reverence due to the oracles of God; with humility and modesty, from a sense of our own weakness and God's perfection; and with earnest prayer, for the divine assistance. Moreover; they, who expect to reap benefit by reading the holy scriptures, must diligently consider the design of the author of each book of scripture, and what is the subject he chiefly handles, with the occasion of his writing: they must explain difficult places, by those which are more clear; must distinguish, between literal and figurative expressions; and never have recourse to metaphors and figures, but when somewhat absurd arises from their being taken in a proper and literal sense: they must confine themselves, to the natural signification of words, the usual forms of speech, and the phrase of scripture: they must acquaint themselves, with the common usages and

* See the 6th and 7th Articles of Religion.

customs of those times, in which they were written, to which many expressions allude: they must not make either side of the question in dispute, the reason of their interpretation; for this is, to make it a rule of interpreting scripture, not a question to be decided by it. Again, they must apply general rules to particular cases; it being impossible, scripture should comprehend all special cases, which are infinite: And, where there is any difficulty, nothing adds greater light, than the consulting those primitive and faithful witnesses; who learned the true sense of the scriptures, from the authors themselves. Without some such means no author can be well understood; and it is for this reason, that I would exhort a diligent and constant attendance, to hear this word explained and enforced in *catechising* and *preaching*. For,

In catechising. *First*, CATECHISING is a peculiar method of teaching the ignorant, by question and answer; adapted to the meanest capacities, for their more ready instruction in the first and necessary rules or principles of our holy religion; and is of very ancient date, in the practice of the christian church. And as to the great usefulness of it, catechising hath a particular advantage, as to children; because they are subject to forgetfulness, and want of attention. Now catechising is a good remedy against both these; because, by questions put to them, children are forced to take notice of what is taught, and must give some answer to the question that is asked: and a catechism, being short, and containing in a little compass the necessary principles of religion; it is the more easily remembered. Again, the great usefulness, and indeed the necessity of it plainly appears by experience: for as Solomon observes, 'Train 'up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is 'old he will not depart from it:' so it very seldom happens, that children, who have not been catechised, have any clear and competent knowledge of the principles of religion ever after; and, for want of this, are incapable of receiving any great benefit from preaching, which supposes persons, to be in some measure instructed beforehand in the main principles of religion. Besides, if they

have no principles of religion fixed in them, they become an easy prey to seducers.

A duty on parents and masters, &c. I would therefore recommend, to parents and masters of families, this way of instructing their children and servants: For I do not think, that this work, should lie wholly upon ministers. Ye must do your part at home; who living always with your families, have better and more easy opportunities of fixing the principles of religion upon your children and servants. Neither must such, as have been so unfortunate as to grow in years without this instruction, imagine they are exempt from it: for, as soon as they are able, to see their own danger and discover their own ignorance; they must apply in good earnest, to this means of obtaining the first things to be known in the christian religion.—Therefore, whoever he be, of what age and condition soever, who finds himself ignorant of the mysteries of his religion and service of God, or in any degree feels a want of any part of necessary saving knowlege; let him (as he loves his soul, and would rescue it from eternal death) seek out for instruction, first, by the means of catechising; and then he shall profit, thro' God's grace by the word preached. For,

The use of sermons. *Secondly,* PREACHING is not only a publication of God's mercy, favour, blessings, grace and promises to those, who love him and keep his commandments; but it is also a declaration of those threats and punishments, recorded in the word of God, against the obstinate and evil-doer. Its use is put to us in mind of our duty, and to exhort and assist us to withstand those lusts and temptations, which set us at enmity with God. Consequently we honour God, by attending to his holy word (when it is read and preached to us) with a resolution of mind to perform, what we shall be convinced is our duty: with such a submission of our understanding, as is due to the oracles of God; and with a particular application of general instructions to the state of our own minds, that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God the Father, and of our Lord and Saviour Je-

sus Christ. Therefore, at hearing the Word preached, we should give our attention with great reverence; and take heed, how we hear: lest our negligence be interpreted, as a contempt of that authority which speaks to us: and not behave, as some do; who, at church, place their public worship, not in their hearts and knees, but in lolling, gazing, and unseemly gestures; and employ their ears (the channel, by which faith is conveyed into our souls) not to hear their duty, but to find some unreasonable fault with their teacher: For, instead of improving by the word of God, preached for their instruction; when they return home, their whole discourse turns upon the man, and not his sermon. Such hearers never want subject of complaint against the preacher: that they may, in some measure, screen their neglect of their duty to God, their neighbour, and themselves: Thus, at one time they find fault with his memory, because too short; or with his sentences, because too long: if he be young, they despise his youth; and say, that he does but prate: if he be aged, they seldom scruple to term his zeal for their souls and his good instructions, the dictates of a man in his dotage, who knows not what he says. Again, if he preach in a plain style, suitable to weak capacities; they call him a sloven, a bad master of language: if he be solid, then he preaches flat; but if he be not plain, then he is too witty; and, if not solid, he is certainly accused of levity, and of ridiculing the word of God: if he be unlearned, they justly say, he is not worthy of so great a calling; and if he be endued with the qualifications of a good pastor and teacher, he is immediately proclaimed unfit for so plain and ignorant people. In fine, when the sermon must be confessed to be very excellent, then they say, he preaches for gain; and if it be but ordinary, they cry, they can read as good at home. But now,

The end of hearing a good sermon. What can be thought, to be the end of such men? God may justly give them up, to a reprobate mind; and withdraw that grace, which they have abused: and then, it is

no wonder, they turn the most serious things into ridicule; and hear the terrors of the Lord without the least sense of their own guilt. God grant, this be not the case of many; who stay from church, under a pretence that they cannot benefit under such and such a minister! And let not those, who constantly attend on stated days to hear God's word preached, and yet continue in their habitual sins; let them not think, they have honoured God! No. The way to reverence God by honouring his word, is not to imagine, that when we have been affected with a sermon, the great end of hearing is fulfilled; for we must apply those good instructions and exhortations, in such a manner, as to enable us to conquer our most secret sins. Sins are the distempers of the soul; and God has prescribed this, as a means of its cure. Therefore, as no patient can hope for the cure of his bodily infirmities, by talking with, or only looking upon the physician, and his prescriptions and medicines; so neither can any man hope to be released from his sins; if he never apply God's word, to enable him to eschew evil and to do good. The main matter then of hearing a sermon, is the putting useful instructions into practice; for, when God enlightens our minds, it is our business to walk as children of light: We must never despair of conquering our evil habits, nor be discouraged in prosecuting the convictions of our own consciences; for a strong resolution, with the assistance of God's grace, will overcome great difficulties. Let us therefore never measure our godliness, by the number of sermons, at which we are present; as if that outward mark of reverence to God were any sure mark of a good christian: But let us estimate our obedience to God, and the reformation of our manners, by the quantity of the good fruit, which the dew of God's grace, through the ministration of the word, has enabled us to bring forth; without which disposition of heart, all our hearing will only draw the heavier judgments of God upon us: because we hear and know our master's will, and do it not.

VII. *Honor due to God in his Sacraments.*

Fifthly, The great mark of a christian duty to God is the honouring him in his SACRAMENTS of *baptism* and the *Lord's supper;* which are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof. In which description we are taught that, to constitute a sacrament, there must be, *first*, some visible sign of it, apparent to our senses: *secondly*, this sign must represent some spiritual grace and favour vouchsafed us by God: *thirdly*, that outward sign must be of Christ's own institution: and, *fourthly*, it must be appointed by him as the means of conveying to us this inward grace, and as a token of assurance that he will bestow the one upon those who do worthily receive the other. And we are not to doubt, but that in the right use of the outward signs of water, and bread and wine, he will by the power of his spirit, though in a manner unknown, because not necessary to be revealed to us, convey, and confirm, in baptism, and in the Lord's supper, to the worthy receivers thereof, the divine grace signified, according to his own most true promise and engagement. And therefore we must consider both these sacraments under those particular properties. And, first, concerning baptism.

Of Baptism and its Benefits. By the sacrament of BAPTISM we are initiated into the profession of christianity, and admitted to the terms of the christian covenant. I say, *baptism* delivers us from the vengeance of God, by cleansing us from the guilt and power of sin; by taking us into a covenant of grace and favour with God; and by infusing a principle of new life into our souls, to enable us to live according to God's laws, and to attain that everlasting happiness, which is the free gift of God in Christ. Or, as our church-office explains it, 'Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died, and rose again for us so should we who are baptized, die from sin, and rise

again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living. Nevertheless we must not dare to take upon us to exclude any from all hope of God's mercy in extraordinary cases, as the want of opportunity or capacity of receiving it. To pronounce positively of their salvation we have no warrant; because the promises of salvation, as the gospel declares them to us (and we have no promises of salvation but in the gospel) are only made to those that believe in Jesus Christ, and enter into his covenant by baptism. On the other side, to pronounce of their damnation seems very harsh and uncharitable: nor do I know that any in the scripture are threatened with damnation, but such as reject the gospel after it is preached to them, or dishonour their profession, after they have embraced it, by a wicked unholy life; neither of which can be said of those we are now speaking of. We ought therefore to leave them to the uncovenanted mercies of God, if I may so speak. For this we are certain of, that the Judge of all the earth will do right: nor will he demand the tale of bricks where he hath allowed no straw to make them. But as the Jews were obliged, under the severest penalty, to be circumcised, and keep the passover; so our guilt and danger will be proportionably great by not receiving baptism, when it is in our power; it being of the highest authority, and the distinguishing badge of, as well as admission into, our most excellent profession. And since we are the offspring of Adam, and consequently subject to death by his fall; how can we be made partakers of that redemption, which Christ hath purchased for the children of God, if we do not enjoy the advantage of that method which is alone appointed by Christ for us to become members of God's kingdom? For Jesus himself hath assured us, Except one be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And therefore it was the constant custom of the primitive church to administer baptism to infants for the remissions of sins, by and under such conditions, vows, or obligations, to which they were to consent, and according to which they were to endeavour to regulate their con-

duct through this world in their way to heaven. And this practice was esteemed by the best tradition to be derived from the apostles themselves; and is therefore still retained and enjoined by our church, which obliges all persons coming to be baptised, either by themselves or sureties, to promise and vow, that they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; to believe all the articles of the christian faith; and to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of their life.

Where, by the *devil*, we mean all the fallen angels, of which one is chief, prince, or head; that great enemy of Christ and his church, who, having seduced our first parents, hath ever since had, through God's permission, a great power in the world, and still seeketh our destruction, by tempting us to sin, and then accusing us to God for it. And the works of the devil are all wickednesses and vices, but in particular all idolatry, witchcraft, fortune-telling, and dependance on the creatures; and especially the crimes of which the devil is principally guilty, and tempts men; such as pride, envy, murder in fact or in the heart, lying, deceiving, and misleading, especially in matters of religion. And when we renounce the devil and all his works, we reject and withstand that usurped power and dominion, which he exercises in the world, we resist his personal temptations, and engage in no kind to be partakers of his crimes, as we would not share in his punishment.

Of the vows of Baptism. By renouncing the *pomps* and *vanities* of this wicked world, we are to understand, not that the world, which God hath created, or any of its natural enjoyments, are evil: but that the things to be renounced are the evil customs of the world, the vicious fashions, and the corrupt practices, that prevail in it; all methods of ambition and grandeur, inconsistent with integrity and virtue; and all such sorts of diversions and entertainments, as plainly tend to corrupt good manners. And by the vanities of the world we are to understand riches unjustly gotten, or vainly and profusely squandered away in riotous living, or pursued with insa-

tiable covetousness, which leads men into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. Thus christians absolutely renounce the yielding themselves up to all excess either in diet, sports, or apparel; and the setting their hearts upon the wealth or greatness of the world, or on those customs and practices of worldly men, which are in themselves sinful: and they so far renounce the honours and riches of the world, as not to be ambitious of the former, nor covetous of the latter; and, in general, do hereby look upon themselves debarred from having more to do than what is necessary, with any thing in the world, which may be like to prove, an occasion of sin to them, or that may probably tend to turn them from God, and draw off their mind from the other world.

As to the sinful lusts of the *flesh*, they are thus reckoned up; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife; sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: and consequently to renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh is to avoid adultery and fornication, rioting and drunkenness, and all that filthiness of the flesh and spirit, which is inconsistent with christian purity, and will render us unclean in God's sight. Finally, christians in their baptism absolutely renounce all desires whatsoever, which fasten upon any forbidden, and therefore, unlawful object; so as never to give any indulgence, or consent to them, much less must they follow, or be led by them, to the commission of any sinful act.

By the *articles* of the *christian faith* we are to understand all those doctrines of religion, for which we have the authority of Christ and his apostles; the fundamental points whereof are summed up, in that form of sound words, which, because it contains the heads of the doctrine preached by the apostles, and was compiled, for the most part, in or near their times, is called the *apostle's creed:* to which we are not only to assent; but we are also strictly obliged by our baptismal vow to learn them, both as to the words and meaning of them. For

the nature of that faith, which we are to give to the articles of our creed, is such an assent as must be sincerely from the heart: according to that saying in the eighth chapter of Acts, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized: it must be active, and work by love, and stedfast without wavering; not only believing the great benefits and promises of God to mankind, but gratefully accepting of the same by a dutiful obedience and resignation to God through Christ: without this, it will little avail us to believe all the articles of the christian faith.

By the promise to keep God's holy *will* and *commandments*, we are bound by vow to yield a universal obedience unto, and to keep as long as we live, our good resolutions; not to break, but to keep the ten commandments of the moral law: for baptism, and faith, and resolutions of obedience are nothing; unless they produce the real fruits of a virtuous and good life.—The just shall live by faith: but, if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The meaning of which is, not that men, in this frail and mortal state, can continue without sin; but that they must press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; constantly endeavouring to keep all God's commandments; under which are included all those particular precepts of the Old and New Testament, which are reducible to one another of those heads: for, as Jesus himself observes, On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets, No one sin must reign in us; the only true religion is to do whatever God commands; and that, because he, from whom we have received all that we have, and to whom we owe all that we can do, commands it. All other schemes open a door to confusion and licentiousness. We must either follow God's will, and be determined by it; or we must set up our own headstrong self-will in opposition to his unerring wisdom. How much then do they derogate from the honour of God, who represent religion as an unprofitable and unpleasant task! when it is plain to any man, that considers things rightly, and is not under the prejudice of

his lusts and passions, that the great design of religion is to make us happy here, as well as hereafter; that all its rules and precepts are most admirably suited to this end. There is nothing in religion, but what tends to make our lives easy, cheerful, and contented; nothing but what is suitable to our natures, and agreeable to the dictates of right reason; nothing but what will enoble our minds, enlarge our understandings, and inspire us with a generous principle of universal love, and charity, and goodwill to mankind; in short, the commands of God are not grievous, but his yoke is easy, and his burden light.

Thus I have shown you the nature of the vows in baptism: and now I must inform you, that except a christian, when arrived at years of understanding, shall believe and do, as promised by his sureties in baptism, he will certainly forfeit all the benefits thereof; which are the gracious promises of pardon and forgiveness of sin upon our true repentance; the assistance of God's blessed spirit, and the influences of his grace to enable us to work out our salvation; the benefit of Christ's intercession in heaven, where he is an advocate for us with the Father; a share in all those promises of care and protection made to the church; and an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Because the benefits promised by God in baptism are that part of God's covenant with man, which we have no reason to hope we shall obtain, till we comply with our promises made to him in that sacrament; which by God's help we are always able to do: for God can never be supposed to command or require more of us, than what he enables us to perform. Therefore, both in justice, and in regard of our own interest, we are bound to stand to his covenant, which was made in our name by our godfathers and godmothers, because they promised no more than what is implied in the very nature of baptism. All mankind are in the hands of God's unlimited goodness: yet his covenanted mercies are the peculiar lot and portion of christians, the members of Christ's holy church, who honoured God by a due

discharge of those things promised in baptism; of which promises you have already been taught what that first vow obliges to renounce; namely, the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. And therefore let us now proceed to inquire what that faith is, to which we give our assent, when we profess to believe all the articles of the christian faith; of all which articles we shall treat, after that I have laid down some instructions, concerning divine revelation, and given some convincing reasons for its certainty.

SUNDAY III.

I. *Of* divine revelation, *and its difficulties, evidences, and excellency.* II. *Of* faith *in* one GOD. III. *The Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.* IV. *Of* GOD's providence, *and of* chance, fortune, necessity *and* fate. V. *Of the* Trinity *or three Persons in the Godhead, and why difficult to be believed.*— VI. *Of faith in* Jesus Christ, *our Lord; an objection against this faith answered.* VII. *The angel's message to the* virgin Mary; *and* VIII. *Of the* incarnation *and* birth *of* Christ.

I. *Of Divine Revelation.*

CONCERNING a divine revelation, the proofs are three: *first*, they may relate to the person inspired; *secondly*, to those that received the matter revealed from the persons inspired; *thirdly*, to those that live remote from the age of the inspired persons; as is the case of all christians since the time of Christ, and the apostles his successors. For, if the Almighty vouchsafeth to make a revelation, or manifest and discover any truth or thing to a man, of which he was before ignorant; it is very reasonable to think, that he will satisfy the person concerning the reality of it; for it can-

not signify any thing, or have any effect upon the man, unless he be satisfied it is such. And

The assurance of a divine revelation, as to the person himself, is most probably wrought by the great evidence it carries of its divine original. In God's manifesting himself to the prophets, there was such a powerful representation on the part of the messenger of God's will, and that clearness of perception on the part of the person inspired, or to whom he was sent, as did abundantly make good those phrases of *vision* and *voice*, by which it is described in scripture: and sometimes there was added some sign of supernatural proof; as in the case of *Gideon* and *Moses*. By those examples we may perceive, why a good man has that certainty, which the deluded person wants; because a good man, when he is inspired and reflects upon it, and diligently considers the assurance which he finds in his mind, can give a rational account of it to himself, which the deluded person cannot have; whose positiveness often arises from pride and self-conceit, which have no small influence; but more especially from a disordered imagination or fancy, which interrupts the operations of the mind; whereas a real inspiration will bear the test of the prophet's reason, and the people's examination.

Again; the truth of such a revelation may be judged of, from the reasons why we ought to believe the persons pretending to inspiration, whose known probity and approved integrity clear them from all suspicion of imposture: and whose prudence and understanding set them above being deceived: also from the extraordinary evidence and testimony of miracles: the prediction of future events; and, above all from the matter of the revelation; which, when it concerns mankind in general, must be worthy of God, as proceeding from him, and must tend to the advantage, the satisfaction, and happiness of mankind, to whom the revelation is made. For justice, holiness, and goodness are as necessary and essential to our thoughts of God, as power; and, consequently, a rev-

elation, that contradicts those attributes, cannot come from the Father of truth.

And the necessity and reasonableness of this evidence shews it to be a proof of the highest nature: for it being such as every man, who is master of sense and reason, can judge of; so it is what every man ought to be determined by. For, as in all other things which have been done at a great distance of time; so the evidence necessary to satisfy us of the truth, and to oblige us to believe that revelation to be sent from God by divers persons, and in divers manners, is the credible report of eye and ear witnesses concerning the miracles that have been wrought, and the predictions that have been foretold, to prove persons inspired, conveyed down to us in such a manner, and with such evidence, as that we have no reason to doubt of the truth of them; besides, the inward evidence of the christian revelation confirms the outward evidence that was given to it: for, as it excels all other forms of religion, that ever appeared in the world; so it is every way worthy of God, entirely beneficial to his creatures, and agreeable to the best reason and sense of human nature.

The scripture, though deep, is clear in every doctrine that tends to the glory of God, the good of mankind, and the benefit of our own souls. So far God has gone; and further than this he needed not go, to answer the end of a revelation. Whatever things there are in it hard to be understood, and a moderate application cannot clear up, they may exercise the abilities of the curious, but are not necessary to edify the bulk of mankind. Any man, who diligently and impartially searches the scriptures, comparing place with place, interpreting the darker passages by the clearer, and attending to the scope and design of the author, may furnish himself with an intelligible, consistent, and determinate rule of faith and practice; may derive thence hopes full of a blessed immortality; and find there that beautiful assemblage of moral truths, clear and unmixed, which lie scattered through the

writings of all the philosophers, and are in them blended with pernicious errors. Whereas other writers took things in too high a key, and were proud to soar above the level of common apprehensions; but the inspired writers stoop to the lowest capacities, at the same time that they enlighten the highest. Whatever precept is briefly and in general terms delivered in one place, is more clearly and distinctly unfolded in another: and where there is the addition of any doctrine, which natural reason could not discover, it is so far from contradicting the plain and evident sense of mankind, that upon consideration it appears highly useful to us in the state in which we now are. For the great fears and doubts of mankind, concerning the way of appeasing the offended justice of God, are removed, and the dishonour that was done to his justice and holiness satisfied by the death of Christ. A man may look into his Bible, and see plainly there what will become of him, when the present scene is shifted, as to his most important, I had almost said, his only concern, a future state; who, if he were left to himself, the more he considered the point on every side, the more he would find himself bewildered in doubts, without coming to any determination. Happy are we, if we know our happiness, who have a revelation, like its great author, full of grace and truth.

The *christian religion* proposes a reward, excellent in itself and lasting in its duration; and clearly and plainly revealed. The precepts laid down for the direction of our lives comprehend all sorts of virtue, that relate either to God, or to our *neighbour*, or to *ourselves*; they have cleared what was doubtful by the light of nature, and have made the improvements of it necessary parts of our duty. It supplies us with powerful assistance for the performance of our obedience; light for our dark minds; strength for our weak resolutions; and courage under all our difficulties; and, above all sets before us an exact and perfect pattern for our instruction and encouragement. So that the christian revelation in itself, as well as the external evidence, proves its original to be from God.

Hence consider the great guilt of those who reject the christian revelation; for they resist the utmost evidence, that any religion is capable of receiving, both from its inward value, and from the outward attestation that God has been pleased to give it, by miracles and prophecies; and consequently, by this act of theirs they condemn themselves, because they reject the only means of their salvation, though it is supported by all the faith of history, and uninterrupted records; which is all the evidence in such circumstances, that can be presumed necessary, or can possibly be had. This, therefore, is sufficient to inspire us with the knowledge of God, and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord; and with a thankful remembrance of all things they have done and promised to us, and an abhorrence of all that should from scripture appear to be displeasing to the Almighty. For,

II. *Of the Christian Faith in one God.*

When we in the *first* ARTICLE of our *Creed* profess a belief in *one God*, the *Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth*, we not only declare that we acknowledge him to be the Lord, and that he has revealed his will to us to guide us in the way of truth; but that he has reserved some things to himself, of which, as they regard not the creature, he hath made no revelation, as namely, the manner how there can be three persons in one God; how the divine and human nature could be united in one person, Christ Jesus: or how a virgin could conceive and bear a son without the knowledge of a man. Therefore when we say, *I believe in one God*, let it not be such a belief only as the heathens, or those who only follow the dictates of nature, have, who collect from the things that are seen the eternal power and godhead; but it must be that christian faith, which believes there are three distinct persons in one God, *Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, who is the *one* only living and true God; existing of himself, by the necessity of his own nature; absolutely independent, eternal, omnipre-

sent, unchangeable, incorruptible; without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, knowledge, and wisdom; of perfect liberty and freedom of will; of infinite goodness, justice, and truth, and all other possible perfections, so as to be absolutely self-sufficient to his own infinite and unalterable happiness. And if so, it will certainly follow, that this same supreme self-existent cause and Father of all things did, before all ages, in an incomprehensible manner, by his almighty power and will, beget or produce a divine person, styled the *Word*, or *Wisdom*, or *Son of God*; begotten, not made; God of God, in whom dwells the fulness of divine perfections; the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; having been in the beginning with God, partaker with him of his glory before the world was; the upholder of all things by the word of his power; and himself over all, God blessed forever. In like manner, what has been said of the Son may with little variation be, very agreeably to right reason, understood concerning the original procession, or manner of derivation of the *Holy Ghost*, from the Father and the Son.

As we believe God to be *one*, so we believe him to be in such a manner one, that there cannot possibly be another; for all other things must derive their being from him, and whatever being has its existence from another, cannot be God; but must be a creature. And this unity of God is of universal obligation to be believed, that we may be fixed as to the object of our worship, and place our religious adoration there only, where it is due: and also that we may give him that honor, which is due to him alone; part whereof is, that we have no other gods but one: for this is the ground of all religion: him only must we serve, because he only is God; in him only must we trust, because he only is our rock; to him only must we direct our devotions, because he only knows the hearts of the children of men; him must we love with all our heart, because he only has infinite goodness, mercy, beauty, glory, and excellency. And,

III. *The Father, the almighty maker of heaven and earth.*

The same reason that demands our believing one God obliges us to believe that one God to be the *Father:* for unto us there is but one God the Father by creation; as also, in respect of his preservation, as a man is said to be the father of him whom he educates. Likewise in respect of redemption from a state of misery to a happy condition; for he is the true Father, whose word it is, even the Father of lights, who of his own will begat us with the word of truth. Thus whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works. Finally, in respect of adoption; thus it is said, that he hath predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, and that we receive the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. Yet still there is a higher and more proper notion of God's paternity, in respect whereof he is the Father of Christ; by whom he is sometimes called *the* Father, sometimes *my*, sometimes *your*, but never *our* Father. Christ is the beloved, the first-born, the only-begotten, God's own Son; and we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

The perpetual obligation for us to believe that God is our Father appears in that it is the ground of our filial love, fear, honour, and obedience; gives life to our devotions, assurance to our petitions, being directed, in obedience to our Saviour's commands, to God as our Father; sweetens our afflictions and his fatherly corrections: and the assurances of his love and pity to us, infer the necessity of our endeavouring to imitate him, to be holy as he is holy, merciful as he is merciful, and perfect as he is perfect.

Why the Father is called Almighty. When we say, that he is *almighty*, we profess God's absolute authority, in respect of making whatever he pleases, in such manner as best pleases himself; and in respect of possessing and governing all things so made by him: this right is independent, as being received from none, and is the sole

fountain of all such right in any other: and it is infinite, in respect of the object, as extending to all things in heaven and earth; in respect of its fulness, as being absolute and supreme, far above what the potter hath over his clay; and in respect of its continuance, as being all-powerful and eternal. And we must believe this dominion to work in us an awful reverence of his majesty, and an entire subjection to his will; to breed in us patience under our sufferings; and to make us thankful for his mercies received, as knowing that they justly might have been denied us; we having no manner of right to claim them, as a debt from our Creator.

The whole world, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein, were created and made by the same God, and this, through the operation of his Son, that divine Word, or Wisdom of the Father, by whom the scripture says, that God made the world, and all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things exist; and without him was not any thing made that was made: all this likewise is very agreeable to sound and unprejudiced reason. For that neither the whole, nor any part of the world; neither the form, nor motion, nor matter of the world, could exist of itself, by any necessity in its own nature, can be sufficiently proved from undeniable principles of reason: consequently both the whole world; and all the variety of things that now exist therein, must of necessity have received both their being itself, and also their form and manner of being, from God, the alone supreme and self-existent cause; and must needs depend upon his good pleasure every moment, for the continuance and preservation of that being. Therefore, the learned of all ages have unanimously agreed that the world evidently owes both its being and preservation to God.

IV. *Of God's Providence.*

And this all-wise and almighty Creator, who made all things by the word of his power, and upholds and preserves them by his continual help, does also by his all-wise *providence* perpetually govern and direct the issues and events of all things; takes care of this lower world, and of all (even the smallest things) that are therein; disposes things in a regular order and succession in every age, from the beginning to the end of the world; and inspects, with a more particular and special regard, the moral actions of men. But we must not expect, that God's particular providence will interpose, where our own endeavours are sufficient: for that would be to encourage sloth and idleness, instead of countenancing and supporting virtue. Nor ought we to expect to be relieved from difficulties and distresses, into which our own mismanagement and criminal conduct have plunged us. But when without any fault of ours our affairs are so perplexed and intangled, that human assistance will be of no avail; then we must have recourse to God, that he would give us wisdom to conduct us through all the labyrinths and intricacies of life; resolution to grapple with difficulties; and strength to overcome them. This, as it is far more expressly, clearly, and constantly taught in scripture, than in any of the writings of the most learned men, so it is highly agreeable to right and true reason. For that a Being, which is always present and infinitely wise cannot but know every thing that is done in every part of the world, and with equal ease take notice of the very least things as of the greatest; that an infinitely powerful Being must needs govern and direct every thing in such manner, and to such ends, as he knows to be best and fittest in the whole, so far as is consistent with that liberty of will, which he has given to all rational creatures; and that an infinitely just and good Governor cannot but take more particular and exact notice of the moral actions of all mankind, and how far they are conformable or not conformable to the rules he has set them: all this, I say, is most evidently agreeable to sound rea-

son. So that what the vanity of science, falsely so called, has ascribed to nature, or second causes, exclusively of the first; and what men vulgarly call chance or unforseen accident; is in scripture resolved into the immediate will and providence of God. Thus, when a person is slain by chance or accident, as men vulgarly speak, the scripture more accurately expresses it, saying, that God *delivered* such a one *into the hand* of him that slew him without design: Exod. xxi. 13. And in *all other* instances the same notion is every where kept up in scripture. Neither is it merely in a pious manner of expression that the scripture ascribes every event to the providence of God; but is strictly and philosophically true in nature and reason, that there is no such thing as chance or accident: it being evident that those words do not signify any thing really existing, any thing that is truly an agent, or the cause of any event; but they signify merely men's ignorance of the real and immediate cause. And this is so true, that very many, even of those who have no religion, nor any sense at all of the providence of God, yet know very well by the light of their own natural reason, that there neither is nor can be any such thing as *chance*, that is, any such thing as an affect without a cause; and therefore what others ascribe to chance they ascribe to the operation of *necessity* or *fate*. But *fate* also is itself in reality as truly nothing, as chance is. Nor is there in nature any other proper cause of any event, but only the free-will of rational and intelligent creatures acting within the sphere of their limited faculties, and the supreme power of God directing, by his omnipresent providence, the inanimate motions of the whole material and unintelligent world. This is the truest philosophy, as well as the best divinity. For what is *nature?* is it an understanding being? or is it not? If it be not, how can an undesigning being produce plain notices of contrivance and design? If it be an understanding being, who acts throughout the universe; then it is that great being whom we call God. For *nature*, *necessity*, and *chance*, mere phantoms, which have no reason, wisdom, or power, cannot act, with the utmost exactness of wisdom, powerfully, incessantly, and every where.

V. *Of God's Providence.*

We believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be *three distinct persons* in the divine nature; because the holy scriptures in several places distinguish them from one another, as we use in common speech to distinguish three several persons; this is recorded in the form of administering the sacrament of baptism, which is in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and in the solemn blessing with which St. Paul concludes his second epistle to the Corinthians; The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost: and also the three witnesses in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, prove that each of these persons is God. Besides, the names, properties, and operations of God are attributed to each of them in holy writ. That the names, properties, and operations of God are attributed to the second person in the blessed Trinity, the Son, is plain from St. John: the Word was God. St. Paul says, that God was manifested in the flesh; that Christ is over all, God blessed for ever; and that the word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intent of the heart. Eternity is attributed to him; the Son hath life in himself, he is the same, and his years shall not fail: perfection of knowledge; as the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father: the creation of all things; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. And we are commanded to honour the Son as we honour the Father: and the glorified saints sing their hallelujahs, as to God the Father, so also to the Lamb for ever and ever. And

We ascribe the same names, properties, and operations of God, to the third person in the blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost; for lying to the Holy Ghost is called lying to God. And because the christians are the temples of the Holy Ghost, they are said to be the temples of God: his teaching all things; his guiding into all truth; his telling things to come; his searching all things, even the deep things of God; his being called the spirit of the

Lord, in opposition to the spirit of man; are plain characters of his divinity. Besides, he is joined with God the Father (who will not impart his glory to another) as an object of faith and worship in baptism, and the apostolical blessing. And the blasphemy committed against him, is said will not be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come.

These plain texts show we are obliged to believe the doctrine of the holy Trinity; and our church affirms, 'There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible: and in the unity of this godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' Which doctrine of the *Trinity*, though it is above reason, in that we cannot comprehend the manner of it, is not however contrary to reason: neither does it imply a contradiction to say, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God: because we do not affirm they are one and three in the same respect. The divine being is that alone which makes God; that can be but one, and therefore there can be no more Gods than one: but, because the scriptures, which assure us of the unity of the divine being, do likewise with the Father join the Son and Holy Ghost, in the same attributes, operations, and worship, as proved above; therefore they are capable of number as to their relation to each other,but not as to their being, which is but one. Consequently, the difficulty which some men pretend they find in the belief of a Trinity, is the effect of their own presumption and ignorance, who pretend to dive into the secret things of God by the weakness of human capacity: and because they cannot unfold the depths of divine wisdom, they charge God foolishly with contradiction. The truth of the case is this: our prospect is bounded by a very narrow horison: our faculties limited within a narrow sphere of activity. And whatever absurdities some people may alledge, without being able to prove, against the Trinity; the greatest absurdity of all is, that weak ignorant crea-

tures should pretend to fathom an infinite subject with a very scanty line. Want of humility, in points of so high a nature, is always, in some degree, want of sense. There may be a bright and sparkling imagination, but there can be no such thing as a well-poised judgment and sound sober sense, without humility. Let us then proceed in our researches after truth, with all due humility and modesty; and not stand upon terms with our Maker, and lose the humble and meek christian in the vain disputes of this world. For, however valuable a clear discernment and an uncommon reach of thought may be, yet humility, which does not exercise itself in matters which are too high, is undoubtedly far more amiable in the sight of that Being, who, though he inhabits eternity, yet dwells with the lowly and contrite. We then give the best proofs of the strength of our reason, when we own the weakness of it, in the deep things of God; humbly content to see him through a glass darkly, till we can see him as he is, face to face.

Of three Persons in the Godhead. This should teach us to submit our reason to the obedience of faith. To believe this mystery, which we are sufficiently assured God hath revealed, though we cannot comprehend it. To contain ourselves within the bounds of sobriety, without wading too far into abstruse, curious, and useless enquiries. To admire and adore the most glorious Trinity, as being the joint authors of our salvation. To acknowledge the extreme love of God toward us, in giving his only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, to die for us sinners; and the wonderful condescension of our dear Redeemer, the merits of whose sufferings were made of more value by the dignity and excellence of his person; and never to grieve that eternal Spirit, by whose gracious help we are made partakers of life everlasting. The least grain of sand is able to baffle the finest understanding: and yet we would pretend to sound the depths of the divine nature and counsels; never considering, what has been often observed, 'that, if what was revealed concerning God were always adapted to our comprehension; how could it with any fitness represent that nature, which we allow to be in-

comprehensible? We need not to ransack the scriptures for difficulties: every thing about us and within us, above us and beneath us, convinces us, that we are very ignorant; and, if once we come to a resolution to quit what is clear (such are the proofs of christianity) upon the account of what is obscure we shall run into universal scepticism. Where

Observe, in an answer to a very popular argument against christianity, That to believe such doctrines of christianity as we cannot comprehend does not destroy the use of reason in religion; for nothing can be a greater reflection upon religion, than to say it is unreasonable; that it contradicts that natural light, which God has fixed in our minds, and that it declines a fair and impartial trial and will not bear the test of a thorough examination. For God enlightened man with reason to discover the grounds of natural religion, and inculcate the wisdom and prudence of acting according to them. Reason shows the conveniency of things to our natures, and the tendency of them to our interest and happiness: since as we are thereby convinced, that piety toward God, and justice, gratitude, and mercy toward men, are agreeable to our natures; so it also discovers to us, that these duties are good, because they bring benefit and advantage to us. And this reason is the faculty whereby the evidence and proof of revealed religion is to be tried: the proper exercise of it in a christian is to examine and inquire, whether what is proposed and required to be believed is revealed by God; whether it comes with the true marks of his authority, and hath him really for its author: for our accepting of any thing as revealed by God must be grounded upon evidence that it comes from him. And when by proper arguments we are convinced of the divine authority of the revelation, reason assists us in discerning the true and genuine sense of such a revelation, and helps us to apply general rules contained in it to all manner of special cases whatsoever. And when we are satisfied that a doctrine is revealed by God, though it is above the reach of our understanding; yet we have the strongest and most cogent reason in the world to believe it: because God is infinitely wise and

all-knowing, and therefore cannot be deceived; and being infinitely good, we may be sure he will not deceive us. Thus we are conducted to the knowledge of that faith and that peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: for this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

SUNDAY III.—Part II.

VI. *Of Faith in Christ Jesus.*

We profess in the *second* ARTICLE of our christian faith, that we *believe in Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son our Lord:* because, as we believe in God, so we must also believe in Christ: for this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ, who shall save his people from their sins. Therefore to believe in *Jesus Christ our Lord* imports not only to be fully persuaded, that he is that eternal Son of God, whom he declared himself to be, and that he is the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; but it further includes our obligation and consent to obey all his commandments, who is our Lord and our King; and to put our whole trust in him alone, for our obtaining eternal life, and all other intermediate blessings, only by his mediation for us with his Father. Therefore, says the apostle, there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. So that we are absolutely obliged to believe this part of the christian faith; because we cannot be saved by Christ, but by believing in him.

When we give the title of *the Christ* or Messiah unto Jesus our Saviour, then we profess to believe that Jesus is the person consecrated of God, by the most sacred anointing, to that high office of saving mankind; like which were the offices of king, priest, and prophet, under the law (in the setting of whom apart to their proper offices the anointing oil was used) as types and shadows of the saviour of all mankind. Wherefore the prophet Isaiah, foreseeing the coming of the Son of God for our redemption, cries out in the person of the *prophet* Jesus,

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. And that Jesus was anointed to the *sacerdotal* office appears from that of the Psalmist, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck. It also appears that Jesus was to be anointed to the *regal* office, from the most ancient tradition of the Jews, and predictions of the prophets; and to this he was solemnly set apart, when God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, might, dominion and power. And he exercises this office by delivering his people a law; and by his grace enabling them to walk in it: by preserving them from temptations; by supporting and delivering them under afflictions; and will at last complete all, by rewarding them in a most royal manner, making them kings and priests unto God and his Father. Wherefore,

If we believe him to be our prophet, we should be induced thereby to hear, and receive, and observe his word, as being delivered by one whom God himself hath declared to be his beloved Son, and hath commanded us to hear: and our belief in him, as our priest, should add confidence to that obedience, and give us boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; and having a high priest over the house of God, to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; to consider ourselves as bought with a price and no longer our own, but bound to live only to him who died for us. Our belief in him, considered as our king, should induce us to be his faithful subjects, and to honour him by a cheerful and ready obedience to his laws. And we may always remember, that this is part of the seal of the foundation of God, that every one that nameth the name of Christ shall depart from iniquity.

When we acknowledge Christ to be *our Lord*, it is not only in respect of his general dominion over all things, but more peculiarly as having by his death conquered him, to whom we had before yielded our-

selves servants to obey; and also having by that death purchased us by his blood. Consequently, seeing that Christ is our absolute Lord and Master; since he has bought us, and has the sole right to the property and possession of us, we must remember that we are not our own; that we ought not to do our own will, but his; and neither live nor die to ourselves, but only to him

Some, that pretend to be guided by right and sound reason, seem to stumble at the dignity of the person whom we believe to have given himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of mankind: they ask, How is it possible, that the only-begotten Son of God should be made flesh, and become man? How is it conceivable that God should condescend so far as to send, and the Son of God condescend willingly to be sent, and do such great things for his creatures? and above all, How is it consistent with reason to suppose God condescending to do so much for such frail and weak creatures as men, who, in all appearance, seem to be but a very small, low, and inconsiderable part of this world?

Here it must readily be acknowledged, that human reason would never have discovered such a method as this for the making peace between sinners and an offended God without express revelation. But then neither, on the other side, when once this method is made known, is there any such difficulty or inconceivableness in it, as can reasonably make a wise and considerate man call in question the truth of a well-attested revelation, merely upon that account: which indeed any plain absurdity or contradiction in the matter of a doctrine pretended to be revealed, would, it must be confessed, unavoidably effect. For, as to the possibility of the incarnation of the Son of God, whatever mysteriousness there confessedly was in the manner of it; yet, as to the thing itself, there is evidently no more unreasonableness in believing the possibility of it, than in believing the union of our soul and body, or any other certain truth; which we plainly see implies no contradiction in the thing itself,

at the same time that we are sensible we cannot discover the manner how it is done. And it is not at all unreasonable to believe, that God should make so great a condescension to his creatures; and that a person of such dignity, as the only-begotten Son of God, should vouchsafe to give himself a sacrifice for the sins of men. He who duly considers that it is no diminution to the glory and greatness of the Father of all things to inspect, govern, and direct every thing by his all-wise providence through the whole creation; to take care even of the meanest of his creatures, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground, or a hair of our head perishes, without his knowledge; and to observe exactly every particle, even of inanimate matter, in the universe: he, I say, who duly considers this, cannot with reason think it any real disparagement to the Son of God (though it was indeed a most wonderful and amazing instance of humility and condescension) that he should concern himself so far for sinful men, as to appear in their nature, to reveal the will of God more clearly to them, to give himself a sacrifice and expiation for their sins, and to bring them to repentance and eternal happiness.

The truth, &c. of christianity. By these and such-like considerations, we arrive at the truth and excellency of the christian religion, or that way and manner of worshipping and serving God, which was revealed to the world by Jesus Christ; wherein are contained articles of faith to be believed, precepts of life to be practised, and motives and arguments to enforce obedience. For the truth of this religion appears from that full and clear evidence, which our Saviour and his apostles gave of their divine mission and authority, and from the nature of that religion they taught which was worthy of God, and tended to the happiness and welfare of mankind. And it is not only universally acknowledged by christians; but it hath been owned by Jews and heathens, who have written of those times. That there was such a person as Jesus Christ, who lived in the reign of Tiberius Cesar. And that the same Jesus was crucified is averred both

by the christians, who, notwithstanding the ignominy they might thereby seem to bring upon themselves, worshipped him as God; and also by the Jews.—Also it is very probable there were public records of the whole matter at Rome, as the account was sent by the Roman governor from Jerusalem to Cesar: for the ancient christians in their writings, in the defence of their religion, appeal thereto; which they had too much understanding and modesty to have done, if no such account had ever been sent, or had not been then extant to be produced: so that no history can be better established by the unanimous testimony of people, otherwise very different from one another, than the life and death of Christ Jesus. Besides,

All the former *prophecies*, which relate to the Messiah, were fulfilled in him alone. He received the testimony of a voice from heaven several times: and he was endowed with the power of working miracles, particularly with the gift of prophecy, proved and made good by the fulfilling of his predictions; than which nothing can be a greater evidence of a divine mission, because it is the greatest argument of infinite power and wisdom. And

The *miracles* which he wrought prove him to be sent from God. For the power of working true miracles, when they are great and unquestionable, and frequently wrought in public, is one of the highest evidences we can have of the divine mission of any person. Upon this ground, Nicodemus concludes that our Saviour was sent from God: and our Saviour himself insists upon this as the great proof of his divine authority; and the resisting the evidence of his miracle he reckons as an aggravation of unbelief: If I had not, says he, done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin: and further, he tells us, such an obstinate resistance of the evidence of his miracles is the sin against the Holy Ghost. And the greatest enemies to him and our holy religion confess, that our Saviour did many wonderful things, though they attributed them to the power of

magic: he healed all sorts of diseases in multitudes of people, by a touch or word, and that sometimes upon those at a distance. The most desperate diseases submitted to his power: he restored sight to the man born blind; he made the woman straight that had been crooked and bowed together eighteen years, and the man that had an infirmity thirty-eight years, he bids take up his bed and walk: he multiplied a few loaves and fishes for the feeding of some thousands: and he raised several from the dead, particularly Lazarus, after he had been four days in the grave. All these miracles he wrought publicly in the midst of his enemies; and indeed they were so public and undeniable, that the apostle appeals to the Jews themselves, declaring, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew. But the great miracle, that gave the utmost evidence of our Saviour's divine authority, was in raising himself from the dead on the third day; a matter of fact, which all christians not only have believed, but esteem the great foundation on which they build the proof of their whole belief.

Besides, the spirit of prophesy resided in him, and his divine authority was made manifest by the accomplishment of his own predictions; for, whenever the predictions have been plain and clear, and the event answerable, it has been always counted a sure proof of a divine mission; upon which account the angel tells St. John that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Thus our Saviour foretold his own death, with the manner of it, and circumstances of his sufferings; the treachery of Judas, the cowardice of his disciples, and St. Peter's denying him; his own resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost in miraculous gifts. He propheeied of the destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass in forty years after his own death, within the compass of that generation, as he had foretold; the very foundations of the temple and city were destroyed, and the ground plowed up, so that there was

not left one stone upon another that was not thrown down; according to our Saviour's prediction: and indeed the signs that he foretold should forerun the destruction of that city, with the circumstances that came with it and followed after, exactly agree with that punctual and credible history of the fact related by Josephus. And he assured his disciples, that his gospel should be published in all nations, and that his religion should prevail against all the opposition of worldly power and malice, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it: which things being purely contingent in respect of us, and many of them unlikely to happen, the fulfilling of such predictions argues a prophetic spirit in our Saviour, and consequently, that he was sent from God.

If christianity was an imposture, it was a strange imposture indeed; an imposture beneficial to the world, but destructive to the authors, in the nature and tendency of the thing itself: beneficial, I say, to the world, since it forbad every vice, and enjoined every virtue, that could make a man more happy in himself, more serviceable to the world, and more acceptable to God. There are few or no other public actions, but what a witty malice may put some sinister interpretation upon; and the best deeds in appearance may, and often do, proceed from a principle of vanity; but the actions of Christ and his apostles will stand the test of the severest scrutiny. For the apostles could not act upon any indirect and interested views of worldly honour, ambition, or gain; they must have been supported by a determined resolution of mind, to bear the utmost pressures of misery and torment, in the cause of truth, founded upon a prospect of future happiness. Therefore,

Unless we believe in this article, where is our faith and hope in the redemption that was wrought by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, which could never have been performed by any person, but by him, who is God as well as man? He must have been a sacrifice of infinite dignity, and nothing less could bear any proportion to the infinite guilt of our sins, as being committed against a God of infinite goodness and majesty. And by this belief we are encouraged and freed from all doubt and

scruple in giving to Christ that divine honour, which is due to him: which if we ascribe to him, without being satisfied that it is his due, we cannot wholly free ourselves from that idolatry which is a breach of the first commandment. By this faith also the inward dignity of Christ, we may learn to raise our affections to the utmost pitch our nature is capable of, in the admiration of that wonderful goodness of the Father in sending his beloved Son to die for us, while we were his enemies, rebels, apostate creatures; and that wonderful love and condescension of the Son, in so far debasing himself for our sakes, who deserved the most grievous vials of his wrath and indignation to revenge the breach of his covenant.

VII. *The angel's message to the* virgin Mary.

In those words by which the angel told the virgin Mary, that she should be the mother of Jesus Christ; that her son should be great, and called the son of the Highest; that the Lord God should give unto him the throne of his father David, that he should reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and that of his kingdom there should be no end; is contained an astonishing message, looking back to the prophecy concerning the Messiah, which foretold, that the government should be upon his shoulder, and his name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, everlasting with the Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, henceforth even for ever. For the angel's description of the Messiah imports, that God would settle upon the Messiah a spiritual kingdom (of which that temporal one of David was but an imperfect representation) the absolute government of his church, that spiritual house of Jacob; and that this kingdom of his should never be destroyed, as the kingdom of the Jews was to be; and which is now fulfilled.

The angel's salutation to Mary. This declaration was preceded by the salutation made to the blessed Vir-

gin by the same angel, in these words: Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women. The meaning of which was, that the blessed Virgin was most excellently disposed to receive the greatest honour that ever was done to the daughters of men; her employment being holy and pious, her body chaste, and her soul adorned with all virtues, particularly with humility, which is in the sight of God of great price: for, though she was to be the mother of a universal and everlasting blessing, which all former ages had desired, and all future times should rejoice in; yet she resigns all this glory to him who gave it her, and declares, whence she received it, that no other name, but his might have the honour. When she received this salutation, she was troubled at the saying of the angel, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation it should be; judging herself unworthy of so great an honour, and being surprised with the strangeness of such an appearance in her retirement. But when the angel positively affirmed that she should conceive and bring forth the Messiah, she inquires, how that could be, since she knew not a man? Yet this implied in her no doubt concerning the thing, or any diffidence in respect to the issue of it; but rather admiration in respect to the wonderful manner of effecting it; at most it implies that she desired to be satisfied in the manner as well as in the matter of this mystery: and therefore the angel answers the difficulty, by declaring the wonderful manner how his message should be brought about, *viz.* That the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and that the power of the Highest should over shadow her; and then furnished her with an example of somewhat of like nature in her cousin, and referred her to the power of God, to which nothing is impossible. Upon this she demonstrated an entire faith and obedience in her reply: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. Then the blessed Virgin expresses her gratitude in that admirable hymn called the *Magnificat;* wherein she shows such a thankful sense of the great honour that was conferred upon her, and testifies her humility and devotion, as well as the infinite power and goodness of God, that, it appears, as she was highly favoured, so she was also ful-

of grace, and had a mind plentifully enriched with the gifts of God's holy spirit. Thus

The only-begotten Son of God *was conceived by the Holy Ghost*, and took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the godhead and manhood were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man: who was seen and handled: who was arraigned, condemned, and crucified; and afterward laid in the grave; not indeed in his divine, but in his human nature, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

When we profess that we believe our saviour Jesus Christ *was born of the virgin Mary*, we are also to believe that the virgin Mary, espoused unto Joseph (who, before and after her espousals, was a pure and unspotted virgin) having, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, conceived within her womb the only-begotten Son of God, did bring him forth after the natural time of other women. So that the Saviour of the world was born of a woman, made under the law, without the least pretence of any original corruption; that he might deliver us from the guilt of sin. For thus our church expresses it; 'Christ, in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit.

He came to be a lamb without a spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world: and sin (as St. John saith) was not in him. But we all (although baptised and born again in Christ) offend in many things; and, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'.

Of the Birth of Christ. And he was born of a Virgin, of the house and lineage of *David*, that he might sit upon his throne, and rule for evermore. And that the promised Messiah was to be born after this miraculous manner, the prophecies of the Old Testament foretold. One says, the Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth, a woman shall compass a man. Another says, behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shal

call his name Immanuel. In consequence whereof his mother that bore him was a *pure virgin*, as appeared both from her own account, and that of Joseph her reputed husband; for, when Joseph doubted of her chastity, an angel was dispatched to clear her honour, and to assure him that what was *conceived* in her was not by man, but *by the Holy Ghost*. And when she objected the impossibility of her being a mother, the angel explains it to her by the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her. This was so unquestionable to the apostles and primitive christians, that they universally and firmly believed it, and thought it a point of so great moment, as to deserve a place in that summary of the christain faith, called the apostle's creed.

The place of our Saviour's birth was *Bethlehem*, whither Joseph and Mary went in obedience to the decree of Augustus to be taxed, the providence of God making use of this conjuncture by verifying a prophecy, to signify and publish the birth of the true Messiah. The concourse of people to Bethlehem was so great, that they could find no accommodation but a *stable*, wherein the blessed Virgin brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; while all the angels of God worshipped him, and published to the world the glad tidings of his birth. For, as certain *shepherds* were keeping watch over their flocks by night, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; so that the splendor of the appearance confounded their senses, and made them sore afraid. But the angel quickly removed the terror that seized them, with the tidings he brought of great joy to all people in these comfortable words; Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Yet, lest they should expect a prince accompanied with pomp and magnificence, the angel described the meanness and obscurity of his circumstances, as a token to guide them in the search of their new-born prince: This shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger. Having this notice,

the shepherds immediately went to Bethlehem; and, having found the account true, they returned, glorifying and praising God.

The Jews were in a general expectation of the appearing of the Messiah at the *time of his birth*, as appears from the ancient and general tradition, that at the end of the second two thousand years the Messiah should appear; and likewise from that particular computation of the Jewish doctors, not long before our Saviour's coming, who, upon a solemn debate of that matter, did determine the Messiah should come within fifty years: which is confirmed from the great jealousy which Herod had concerning a king of the Jews, that was expected about that time to be born; and from the testimony of Josephus, who tells us the Jews rebelled against the Romans, being encouraged thereto by a celebrated prophecy in their scriptures, that about that time a famous prince should be born among them, that should have dominion over all the earth. And that the heathen world was in expectation of such an appearance is evident from the famous testimonies of two eminent Roman historians. Suetonius says, there was an ancient and general opinion famous throughout all the eastern parts, that the fates had determined, that there should come out of Judea those that should govern the world: which words seem to be a verbal translation of that prophecy, Out of Judah should come the ruler. Tacitus writes, that a great many were possesed with a persuasion, that it was contained in the ancient books of the priests, that at that very time the East should prevail, and that they who should govern the world were to come out of Judea. Which phrase, that the East should prevail, refers to that title given the Messiah by the prophet, who says, He is called the man whose name is in the East.*

When our Saviour appeared in the world, he scattered and dispelled that cloud of idolatry, and that corruption of manners, which had fatally overspread it: he became a light to lighten the gentiles, as he was the glory of his people Israel. Whence, under the conduct of such a

* Though we translate it *Branch*, yet the Hebrew word signifies both, and may be rendered the one as well as the other.

guide, we cannot fail of acquiring the knowledge of God's will in this world, and the comfortable expectation of life everlasting in the world to come; whether we consider the dignity and excellency of his person, the clearness and perfections of his precepts, or the brightness of his own example, together with the encouragements of the gracious assistances and glorious rewards, which he hath promised to all those that engage and persevere in his service; for he, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and had the spirit communicated to him without measure, in whom dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily, could not want a perfect knowledge of what was most agreeable to the divine will: and consequently we must have abundant reason to put our trust and confidence *in that method of attaining salvation he hath discovered*; and we cannot fail of success, if we are not wanting to ourselves in our neglect thereof. And it not only directs us to the true object of worship, and gives us rational and worthy notions of that Being we are obliged to adore; but it is most filthy adapted to raise our natures to the greatest improvements they are capable of in this world.

SUNDAY IV.

I. *Of the* sufferings, crucifixion; *and* II. *of the* death, III. Burial, IV. Resurrection, *and* V. Ascension of Jesus Christ. VI. *Of his* mediatorial office *and sitting on the right hand of God; and* VII. *Of his coming to* judge *the world at the last day.*

Of Christ's Sufferings.

In the *fourth* Article of our christian faith we profess our belief, that this same Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, very God of very God, the Prince of

glory, the heir of everlasting bliss, the promised Messiah, who taking the nature of man, yet being in that nature still the same person he was before, *suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried*; or that he was subject to all those frailties and infirmities, those outward injuries and violent impressions, to which mortality is liable. His whole life was full of sufferings, from his birth in the stable to his death on the cross: but, particularly in his last bitter passion, he suffered most exquisite pains and torments in his body, and inexpressible fears and sorrows, and unknown anguish in his soul; he sweat drops of blood. One of his disciples betrayed him; he was denied by another. He was apprehended, and bound by the rude soldiers as a malefactor; accused by false witnesses; arraigned and condemned by that judge who declared he could find no fault in him: he was buffetted, and scourged, and spit upon; derided and mocked by the people, the soldiers, and at last by the high priest himself: he was made the scorn and contempt, and sport of his insolent and insulting enemies; and was hurried to death by the clamours of the rabble, who cried out, Crucify him, crucify him. Accordingly he was nailed to the cross; on which, after having hung several hours, he gave up the ghost. This way of putting to death was called crucifixion, a Roman punishment, remarkable for its exquisite pains and ignominy: the torment of it appeared from the piercing those parts of the body with nails, which are most nervous, and yet did not quickly procure death; and the shame of it was evident from those upon whom it was inflicted, being only slaves, and such as had run away from their masters.

And that our Saviour also suffered in his mind appears from those grievous agonies he felt; first, in the garden, just before his apprehension, when his soul was sorrowful, even unto death; when he sweat as it were drops of blood, and prayed thrice with great vehemence to his Father, that if it were possible, that bitter cup might pass from him; and from that incon-

ceivable anguish, which he expressed upon the cross, when he broke out into that passionate exclamation, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! Thus evil to come tormented his soul with fear; and evil present, with sadness, anguish, and sorrow. Not that he suffered the torments of the damned; for as he knew no guile, consequently he deserved and could suffer no punishment. But when we reflect how perfectly the blessed Jesus understood the evil and guilt of sin; how zealous he was of God's glory; how desirous of the salvation of mankind; and yet withal that he knew how small a number would be saved; how an ungrateful and rebellious world would frustrate the end of his death, and the designs of his mercy; we may in some measure guess at that anguish which sunk and depressed him in such a wonderful manner, as made him say, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. For we may imagine how much he who loved us so well as to die to redeem us, might be grieved and afflicted, when he foresaw, that even by his dying he should not save us all from the damnation of hell.

But here let it be remarked, that our blessed Saviour suffered only in his *human* nature, or that nature of man, which he took upon him; yet, since it was united to the divine nature, and that there was a most intimate conjunction of both natures in the person of the Son, there did thence result a true proper communication of names, characters, and properties; so that the very eternal Son of God may rightly be said to have suffered whatever the man Christ Jesus endured in the flesh for sinners; because the properties of each nature separate may reasonably be affirmed of that person, in whom the two natures are united by the power of God. And our Saviour suffered the painful and shameful death of the cross, to deliver us from the wrath to come, and to purchase eternal redemption for us; for thus our church declares, 'That the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of

the whole world, both original and actual; and that there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.'

The reason of his undergoing these sufferings was, that he might put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; that he might be a propitiation for us through faith in his blood; that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and to give us a perfect pattern of patience and resignation to the will of God, and of all those christian virtues which are necessary to qualify us to receive the benefit of his satisfaction; leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. For,

When by our sins we had justly incurred the displeasure of almighty God, and were liable to eternal misery, our blessed Saviour discharged the obligation; and, by shedding his most precious blood, as the price of our redemption, made satisfaction to God for us: he was contented to be offered a sacrifice for us, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and to atone for the guilt of our offences by the one oblation of himself once offered for us all. And he died not only for our benefit and advantage, but in our place and stead; so that, if he had not died, we had eternally perished, without being able to escape the justice of an angry God. For which reason the blood of Christ, which was shed for us upon the cross, is called the blood of the covenant; because thereupon God was pleased to enter into a covenant of grace and mercy with mankind, wherein he hath promised and engaged, for the sake of Christ's sufferings, voluntarily undergone upon our account, and in our stead, to forgive the sins of all those that truly repent and believe, and to make them partakers of eternal life in the world to come.

The reason and necessity for our belief that Christ suffered, appears from the assurance we thence receive that he was truly man; which if he were not, man could not be redeemed by him. We are also hereby assured, that satisfaction is made to the justice of God for our sins: whereof in his decree no remission could be but by shedding of blood. We likewise

learn from this faith, that he is truly affected with the utmost compassion of our afflictions, and is a most faithful and merciful high priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore ready to succour them that are tempted. And finally, such a belief as this prepares us to receive with patience the sufferings of this life: for, if God spared not his own Son, how shall he spare his adopted ones, whose best evidence of their being his children is their being under his fatherly correction? otherwise, as the apostle observes, we should be bastards, and not sons: but if, when we suffer with him, we also suffer like him, and follow the admirable pattern he has left us of humility and patience, and absolute submission to the will of God, we then shall be made partakers of his divine holiness. And, by his crucifixion, our Saviour cancelled the obligation we were under to perform the whole law, and blotted out the handwriting of ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; so we ought to learn, that, if we will be Christ's, we must crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, and glory in nothing, save in the cross of Jesus Christ crucified. And,

II. *Of Christ's Death.*

Although Jesus was both God and man, yet he did truly and properly die, by an actual departure of his soul from his body; in whose union his life, as man, consisted; as appears not only from the many plain texts of scripture, which say that he died: but farther from those texts, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having thus said, he gave up the ghost by the means of a violent death, caused by the pains and tortures inflicted on him, which could not, without a miracle, but dissolve that natural disposition of the body, which is necessary to continue its union with the soul. He voluntarily, I say, submitted himself to that violence, which could not have been forced upon him without such a submission; and therefore he says, No man taketh away my life from me,

but I lay it down of myself, &c. And, after he had so submitted himself, he could not by the course of nature avoid that death.

How Christ draws us to God. After this view of the humiliation of our blessed Saviour, it cannot be improper for us to consider what effect his life, doctrine, and sufferings should have upon us, and to remark by what steps he draws us to God: in which inquiry we shall soon be convinced, that his method to prevent our falling into sinful actions was to lay a restraint upon our thoughts, which lead to them, and to oblige us to govern our looks, which give birth to our thoughts. To obviate all those evils which proceed from an inordinate desire of riches, he hath discovered to us that admirable temper of mind distinguished in his gospel by poverty of spirit, which makes us even sit loose to the good things we possess. To keep us at a distance from the temptations of lying and detraction, he hath forbid all idle words, that the care to avoid them might secure us from falling into those greater crimes. To hinder the fatal effects of anger and revenge, he hath nipped these passions in the bud, by commanding us to love our enemies, and to do good to them that hate us. To facilitate the virtue of patience, so necessary in this vale of tears, he hath manifested to us the treasures that are hid in adversity, and the advantage of being persecuted for his sake: that what the world calls misfortune and calamity often proves the blessed occasion of making us happy both in this and the next life: Blessed are they that mourn; blessed are they that are persecuted. And to make us quiet and easy in ourselves, and gentle to others, he requires us to have a quick sense of our own weaknesses and defects, and readily to condescend to the lowest offices for the good of our distressed brethren.

All which commands he enforces by his example; for in his own person he hath recommended to us the most hard and difficult, as well as those that are most useful and serviceable. To teach us piety and devotion, he frequently retired, and spent whole nights in prayer; and from worldly occurrences, raised matter

for spiritual thoughts; and conformed not only to divine institutions, but to human appointments that tended to promote virtue. That we might learn humility, this prince of glory condescended to the poverty of a stable; this Wisdom of the Father became dumb, and was reduced to the simplicity of an infant; he spent thirty years of his life in retirement, subject to his parents, and unknown to the world. That we might be ready to exercise universal charity to the bodies and souls of men, the whole course of his life was employed in good works. That we might suppress all ambitious desires, he refused the offer of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and, when the people would have made him a king, he withdrew and they knew not where to find him out. That we might be obedient to the government, he paid tribute, though he was free from any such obligation, and was forced to work a miracle to perform it. That we might live above the world he chose to have no part or share in the possession of it, the Son of man not having where to lay his head. He was perfectly contented in his mean circumstances, that in all our sufferings we might be resigned to the will of God: in his bitter agony he renounced the strongest inclinations of nature, and submitted to the appointment of the Almighty. That a regard to the judgment of the world might not prevail upon us to transgress the laws of our God, he made himself of no reputation; and, in order to do good to mankind, was contented to be esteemed one of the worst of men, a magician, an impostor, a friend and companion of publicans, and sinners, and a seducer of the people. And for us to resist all temptations, to anger, and preserve an evenness of mind under all provocations, he bore with the dulness and slowness of his disciples, both in their understanding and believing what he plainly taught; and answered the sharpest reproaches of his enemies with calm arguments and modest silence, never bringing a railing accusation instead of a sound reason. That we might practise that difficult duty of loving our enemies, he prayed most earnestly for his, even when he felt the most cruel effects of their malice, and imputed it to

their ignorance: Father, says he, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And, that he might excite us to the performance of our duty, he has offered pardon and forgiveness of what is past, and perfect reconciliation to God, by the merits of his death and passion; provided we return to him by sincere repentance, faith, and obedience to his law.

He strengthens us at present, and enables us to do our duty, by enlightening our dark minds, by exciting our wills to that which is good, and by raising our courage under difficulties, dangers, and temptations: he raises our fears by the threatenings of eternal punishment in the next life, and encourages our hopes by the promises of everlasting rewards to the whole man, body and soul: which are the most powerful considerations to take men off from sin, and bring them to goodness, whereby they may obtain eternal life.

Wherefore, it should be our greatest care to please him, by a constant regard to his commandments, and an endeavour to prevail on others to do the same; by making a daily progress in virtue and piety, that we may be conformed to the likeness of that beloved object; by setting a great value upon all means and opportunities of conversing with him, in prayer and meditation, in hearing his word, and receiving the blessed tokens of his love, which he hath left us in the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper; by being more provoked to hear his holy name blasphemed, than for any reproach that can be cast upon ourselves; and by longing for his glorious appearing, that we may enjoy him without interruption to all eternity, in the glory of God the Father.

III. *Of Christ's Burial,*

Christ, being taken down from the cross, was buried as hath been typified by Jonah lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly; and intimated in that of the Psalmist, My flesh shall rest in hope, &c. which plainly teaches, that the body was to be buried, but not lie in the grave to see corruption. Isaiah is more express, saying, He made his grave with the wicked,

and with the rich in his death. Whence this part of our christian faith should work within us correspondent to it: for we are buried with him in baptism unto death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life, being raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. And, as Christ died for us and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into hell. And here

Let it be remarked, that the pious solemnities used in the burial of our Saviour, the honourable mention of the persons concerned in it, and of the woman who brake the box of precious ointment to prepare his body for it, have been in all ages thought sufficient grounds for the decent burials used in the christian church: and this custom of the church is said to have had a great influence in the conversion of the heathens; for after christianity had got possession of the Roman empire, it soon put an end to the old custom of burning the bodies of the dead. Nature itself directs, that some respect seems due to the dead bodies of men, for the sake of the souls that once inhabited them, but much more to those that have been the living temples of the Holy Ghost, and, being bought by Christ, shall be one day made like unto his glorious body, according to that mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

IV. *Of Christ's Resurrection.*

In the *fifth* ARTICLE of our Christian faith we profess to believe, that JESUS CHRIST *on the third day arose again from the dead:* for the beloved and only-begotten Son of God, who was crucified and died for our sins, did not long continue in the state of death; but on the third day,* by his infinite power, did truly revive and raise himself from death, and took again his body,

* He was buried three days, according to the common computation of days both ancient and modern, and particularly in scripture computation. So Lazarus is said to be four days dead, though the fourth day, whereon he was raised, was one of them. Eight days were said to be accomplished for Christ's circumcision, but the day of his birth and circumcision too went both into that account.

with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, reuniting the same soul to the same body that was buried, and so rose the same man according to the testimony of sufficient and credible witnesses, thoroughly informed concerning the fact. These witnesses were the pious women, who, thinking with sweet spices to have anointed him dead, found him risen. The apostles, who conversed with him frequently after his resurrection, were satisfied he had a real body, by his eating and drinking with them. And one of them searched the holes that the nails had made in his hands, and thrust his hands into his side. All the other disciples testified the same, to whom he also appeared, even to five hundred brethren at one time. Then he was seen of James; appeared to Stephen at his martyrdom, and to Paul at his conversion in his way to Damascus. And the veracity of these witnesses cannot be doubted of; because the doctrine they taught forbad all falsehood upon pain of damnation: again, the sealing the truth of this fact with their blood is a sufficient evidence of their veracity.

Whoever looks into the preaching of the apostles will find the resurrection was the great article they insisted on. And St. Paul knew the weight of this article, and the necessity of teaching it, when he said, If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain. I am sensible it is common for men to die for false opinions; but even in those cases their suffering is an evidence of their *sincerity*, and it would be very hard to charge men, who die for the *doctrine* they profess, with insincerity in the profession; mistaken they may be, but every mistaken man is not a cheat. Now if we do but allow the sufferings of the apostles to prove their sincerity, which no man can well disallow, and consider that they died for the truth of a *matter of* Fact, which they had seen themselves, we shall perceive the objections usually brought against this article of our faith will quickly vanish. In *doctrines* and *matters of opinion* men mistake perpetually; and it is no reason for me to take up with another man's *opinion* because I am persuaded he is sincere in it: but when a man reports to me an *uncommon* Fact, yet such a one

as in its own nature is a plain object of sense, if I believe him not, my suspicion does not arise from the inability of human senses to judge in the case, but from a doubt of the *sincerity* of the reporter: in such cases therefore there wants nothing to be proved, but only the *sincerity* of the reporter; and since voluntarily suffering for the truth is at least a proof of sincerity, the sufferings of the apostles for the truth of the resurrection is a full and unexceptionable proof. I am sensible there are many instances of men suffering and dying in an obstinate denial of the truth of facts plainly proved; but then, when criminals persist in denying their crimes, they often do it, and there is reason to suspect they do it always in hopes of a pardon or reprieve. But what are such instances to the present purpose? All such men suffer against their will, and for their crimes; and their obstinacy is built on the hope of escaping, by moving the compassion of the government, or the spectators. Seeing then that the apostles died in asserting the truth of Christ's resurrection, it was always in their power to quit their evidence and save their lives: even their bitterest enemies the Jews required no more of them than to be silent: *But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name*, Acts iv. 17. *Did not we strictly command you, that you should not teach in this name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrines, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us*, Acts v. 28. Others have denied facts, or asserted facts, in hopes of saving their lives, when they were under sentence of death; but these men attested a fact at the expence of their lives, which they might have saved by denying the truth: so that between criminals dying and denying plain facts, and the apostles dying for their testimony, there is this material difference; criminals deny the truth in hopes of saving their lives, but the apostles willingly parted with their lives rather than deny the truth. But to return. And have we not the testimony of his very enemies to bear witness of this great truth? those soldiers that watched at the sepulchre, and pretended to keep his body from the hands of the

apostles, felt the earth trembling under them, and saw the countenance of an angel like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; they who upon this sight did shake, and became as dead men, while he whom they kept became alive: even some of these came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done, when Christ rose from the dead. And the angels, that heavenly host, which brought the glad tidings of his birth to the shepherds, bore evidence to the truth thereof. One came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. Two, in white, sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, said unto the women, Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen. And

The reason why he only appeared to his followers, and not to the Jewish nation is, because it was only of necessity, that those, who were to be the first publishers of the gospel, should have the utmost evidence and satisfaction concerning the truth and reality of Christ's resurrection; for, by the same reason that he was obliged to have appeared to the Jewish nation, it might be pleaded, that the whole Roman empire ought to have had the like manifestation, and that he should have shown himself to the unbelieving in all succeeding ages.

It was necessary Christ should rise from the dead, to show the debt, he died for, was discharged; and that his satisfaction was accepted in heaven. If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins. Besides, he rose to prove himself to be the Messiah, and to evidence the truth and divinity of his doctrine, which he had enjoined to be observed by all men. He had appealed to it as a sign of his being a true prophet, and therefore, by the way of trial, which God prescribed the Jews, *viz.* the accomplishment of predictions, he had appeared to be a false prophet, had he failed therein: for, if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain. God having raised our Saviour from the dead, after he was condemned and put to death for calling himself the Son of God, is a demonstration that he really was the Son of God; and if he was the Son of God, the doctrine he taught was truth from God, and is our guide to heaven.

Again, the resurrection of Christ is an argument of our resurrection; because, by his rising from the dead, he became the first fruits of them that slept; by this is secured our resurrection to eternal life, that he who hath promised to raise us up, did raise himself from the dead.

V. *Of Christ's Ascension.*

In the *sixth* ARTICLE of our christian faith we profess to believe that JESUS *ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father almighty;* for the same Jesus, who by his own power rose again for our justification, having for the space of forty days confirmed the truth of his resurrection, by appearing several times to his disciples, discoursing with them, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God, finished his course upon earth with blessing his disciples; for while he was blessing them, and they beheld and looked stedfastly toward heaven, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight: and behold, Jesus being ascended up into the highest heavens, two angels appeared unto the disciples with the comfortable promise, that as Jesus was taken from them into heaven, so he should in a glorious manner return again to judge the world. And all this was done for the confirmation of the certainty and reality of this great mystery of our faith. Here was need of eye-witnesses, which was not necessary in the act of his resurrection; because whatever was a proof of his life after death was a demonstration of his resurrection: but the apostles not being able to see him, when in heaven, it was necessary they should be eye-witnesses of his act of ascending, that so they might be able to bear their testimony thereto. Besides, before the apostles saw our Saviour ascend, he had told them whither he was going, and what power and dignity would be conferred upon him; and, as an evidence of his exaltation on the right hand of God, had promised to send down the Holy Ghost upon them in a sensible manner; so that they afterward receiving the wonderful effects of his being there, had abundant evidence of his exaltation, namely, his ascension into the heaven of heavens, the

presence of God, where his human nature is seated far above all angels and archangels, all principalities and powers, even at the right hand of God the Father. Therefore,

Since this our Lord's ascension is of that great advantage to mankind, it may and has been asked, Why he did not ascend in the sight of the Jews, that they, who had been deceived before at the time of his crucifixion, might have received a conviction of their error? To which it is answered, that it was only absolutely necessary that they who were to preach the gospel should have the utmost evidence of those matters of fact they testified. God's design was to bring the world to salvation by the exercise of faith, which is an act of assent upon the testimony of another, which is inconsistent with sight. Moreover, it is to be doubted whether they who ascribe our Saviour's miracles to the power of the devil, and suborned the soldiers to say upon his resurrection, that his disciples stole him away, would not have called his ascension if they had seen it, a phantasm and vain apparition of the spirit of some corrupt man. But let the reason be what it will, God appointed it so to be: it is not the business of the creature to ask the Creator his reasons for such and such acts of his omnipotency.

SUNDAY IV.—Part II.

VI. *Of Christ's Office in Heaven.*

Christ, being now seated at the right hand of God, is become a perpetual patron and *advocate* in our behalf, to plead our cause, to solicit our concernments, to represent our wants, and to offer up our prayers and requests to God, by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, which he offered upon the cross for the sins of the whole world. And this his sitting at the right hand of God is expressly foretold in these words, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. And we are assured by the holy penman, that our Jesus is actually there; for one tells us, that he was received up into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of

God; and another records, that God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places. But such scripture phrases are not to be taken in a strict and proper, but in a figurative sense, as spoken in condescension to our capacities, and after the manner of men, and by way of comparison to what belongs to mankind. And as the sitting at a prince's right hand is esteemed a place of the highest honour, the first import of this phrase seems to be, that Christ is invested with the highest glory from God, and exalted to the highest dignity; and since by the hand of God his infinite power may be signified, this phrase may further import Christ's having received the highest power and dominion from God: for where Christ is said to be sitting, we are not to understand that he is determined to such a particular posture of body as is commonly meant by sitting; for he is sometimes represented as standing at God's right hand, sometimes in general as being there without expressing the particular manner of it; but by his sitting we are to understand his secure and quiet continuance in that high glory, majesty, and judicature; and his *full possession* of dignity, and *perpetuity* in retaining it.

And this confirms our faith; because it gives us a further proof of our Saviour's divine mission: for, had he not been sent into the world by God, he had not approved of the message Christ delivered to man.—His visible ascension into heaven strengthens our hope: for, by seeing our own nature thus advanced, we are assured that dust and ashes may thither ascend also; and the blessed Jesus being our head, as members of his body, we may expect admission into that heavenly court, where he sits in glory, since we have his word, which cannot fail, that he is gone to prepare a place for us: and it exalts our affections, by putting us in mind that our treasure is above, and that therefore we ought not to set our affections upon such things as must perish in this world; that heaven is the true and only happiness of a christian; that our

great design in this world ought to be to fit and prepare ourselves for the enjoyment of a blessed eternity; that our constant endeavours ought to tend toward the qualifying ourselves to be received into our Saviour's presence, to whom we have the greatest obligations of gratitude and duty; that by trampling upon our sins, and subduing the lusts of the flesh, we may make our conversation correspond to our Saviour's condition, that where the eyes of the apostles were forced to leave him, thither our thoughts may follow him, even into the highest heavens. We should also learn from this to have an assurance of the pardon of our sins, acceptance of our sincere, though imperfect obedience, and of protection and defence in our spiritual warfare, as knowing that at last we shall be more than conquerors; and it should raise in us a noble ambition of being made partakers of that glory, to which Christ our head already is advanced; who has promised, that to him who overcometh he will grant to sit with him in his throne.

VII. *Of Christ's coming to Judgment.*

When we profess, in the *seventh* ARTICLE of our belief, that CHRIST *will come again to judge the quick and the dead*, we declare that we stedfastly believe, that our Lord Jesus Christ shall at the end of the world descend from heaven in his human nature. As to the manner and the circumstances of Christ's coming: He shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels: he shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God: he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and in that of his holy angels: he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him: and he shall separate them the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: those that sleep in the grave shall awake, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, and they that are alive shall be changed, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Which sufficiently shews the glorious appearing of

the great God, and our saviour Jesus Christ, who shall then come glorious in the brightness and splendour of his celestial body; supported by that authority, which his Father had committed to him, of universal judge, accompanied with thousands of angels, who shall attend not only to make up the pomp of this appearance, but as ministers of his justice; and seated in that bright throne of glory, from which he shall summon all mankind to appear before his dreadful tribunal, where they shall come upon their trial, and have all their actions strictly examined.

Concerning which, if we search the scriptures, there we shall find God hath given assurance unto all men, that he will judge the world by Jesus Christ, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And the method, by which God will proceed with his creatures in that day, is fully described by the judge himself in his gospel. The apostle of the Gentiles declares expressly that we must all appear and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. And the apostle of the circumcision says, that the day of the Lord shall come, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The administration of which judgment is *committed by the Father to his Son Jesus Christ;* God will judge the world in righteousness by that man Christ Jesus, whom he hath ordained. The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his holy angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. Christ commanded his disciples to preach unto the people, and testify, that it is Jesus that is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead; and the tribunal is called the judgment-seat of Christ. Hence observe, that though the right of judging us belongs to God, whose servants and subjects we are, yet the execution of this power of judging is particularly committed to the Son of man; because all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father; that our blessed Saviour might receive public honour in that nature wherein

he suffered; that he, who for our sakes stood before an earthly tribunal, might therefore be constituted judge of the whole world; that he, who was despised and rejected of men, might appear in the glory of his Father, attended with an innumerable train of holy angels; that he, who was condemned and crucified to absolve us, might receive authority to absolve or condemn the whole race of mankind: and because being clothed with a human body, he will make a visible appearance, which will be suitable to the other circumstances of that great day: all which will be performed in the sight of all the world. And again, mankind being judged by one of their own nature a man like themselves, touched with a feeling of their infirmities, greatly declares the equity of his judgment, because he understands all our circumstances, and whatever may influence our case, to lessen or increase our crimes. And

Not only men, but angels also, will be judged at the last day; the fallen angels are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. For the apostle says, Know ye not that we shall judge angels; or sit with Christ, and approve that sentence against them which he shall then pronounce? And all men that have ever lived in the world, and those that shall be alive at our Saviour's coming, shall be gathered before him, who is ordained by God to be judge of quick and dead; and they shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, both small and great. Neither riches, power, nor honour, shall deliver any great man from the hand of God; neither shall the poorest slave be excused for his meanness; for they are all the works of his hands; neither will he have regard to such qualities and circumstances of persons, which do not appertain to the merits of the cause; passing judgment upon all, according to all things we have done in the body, whether they be good or evil.

He will enter into a severe scrutiny how we have employed all those talents that he hath intrusted us with: then shall all the powers and faculties that

have been given us, all the favours and benefits we have enjoyed, all the means and opportunities that have been afforded us for the living virtuously and holily, and thereby to bring honour and glory to our Master, he brought into our view, and an account be demanded of them. He will account with us for our senses, how we have employed them; whether to the purposes they were given us for, the furnishing our understandings, and the right governing of our bodies, or whether we have made them only instruments of sin, and inlets to vanity. He will account with us for our reason and conscience, how we have employed them; whether we have done our best to improve them, and whether they have been faithful guides of our actions, or we have suffered them to be abused with folly and false principles, and to be led captive by our lusts and passions. He will call us to account for our memories, how we have employed them; whether we have been careful to treasure up in them such things as might be useful to our lives, or have only made them the repositories of things idle, impertinent, and unprofitable. He will call us to account how we have spent our time in this world; whether we have employed it to good purposes, in an honest laborious pursuit of a lawful calling, setting a due portion thereof apart for the more immediate service of God, and spending the remainder innocently and wisely; or whether we have squandered it away in idleness, in play, in revelling or in impertinent vicious conversation, in the neglect of our main business. He will call us to account for the good creatures he hath from time to time bestowed upon us for our support and refreshment, how we have employed them; whether we have used them thankfully and soberly, with temperance and moderation; or whether we have abused them to luxury and excess, to gluttony or drunkenness, making therewith provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. He will call us to account for our learning and intellectual accomplishments, for the advantages of our education, for our health and strength, for our wealth and

riches, for our greatness, power, reputation, and all those special and eminent talents that he hath entrusted us with above others, how we have employed them; whether we have made them instruments of doing a great deal of good, and being eminently useful in our generation; or whether they have only ministered to pride, and vanity, and self-pleasing, if not to the worse purposes of vice and wickedness. Lastly, he will call us to account for all the opportunities of grace and means of salvation that we have enjoyed, for all the good counsels and wise exhortations that have been given us; for the revelation of his Son that hath been made known to us; for the use of his word and sacraments; for all the motions and suggestions of his holy spirit within us, dissuading us from sin, and alluring and soliciting us to a course of virtue and holiness. For all these, I say, he will call us to account how we have employed them; whether we have improved them to the purposes for which they were given, as we should have done; whether we have grown in grace, and brought forth fruit suitable to so many helps and advantages, or have been idle and unprofitable servants. These and a great many other things which we now scarce think of, shall we be accountable for to the judge at that day. Then shall the wisdom and the justice of the divine Providence appear eminently to all the world, in rewarding every man according to his works. Then what the upright man has done shall be vindicated and approved; and what he has suffered shall be abundantly made good: every thing shall then be perfectly laid open, and exposed in its true and proper light: plainness and sincerity shall then appear the most perfect beauty; and the craftiness of men, who lie in wait to deceive, be stript of all it colours: all specious pretences, all the methods of deceit, shall then be disclosed before men and angels: and no artifice, no false colours to conceal the deformity of iniquity, shall then take place. In a word, the ill-designing men of this world shall then with shame be convinced, that the upright sincerity which they despised and derided, was the truest wis-

dom; and that the dishonest arts which they so highly esteemed, were in reality the meerest folly. And,

Of the last Judgment. Notwithstanding we may collect from scripture, that there is a *particular* judgment passed upon all men; forasmuch as good men, when they die, pass into a state of happiness, and bad men into a state of misery; yet all the declarations of our Saviour and his apostles concerning judgment, with the parables that relate to it, plainly refer to the last and *general* judgment: for it is only in that day that the whole man shall be completely happy, or completely miserable; for in that day it is that the bodies of men shall be raised; and as they have been partakers with the soul, either in obeying or offending God, so shall they then share in the rewards and punishments of it; and in that day only can the degrees and measures of their happiness and misery be adjusted; for, even after death, the effects of men's good or bad actions may add to their punishment, or increase their reward, by the good or bad examples they have given, by the foundations they have established for piety and virtue, or by the customs they have introduced to countenance immorality and vice. In that day, the reasonableness of God's providence, in relation to the sufferings of good men in this world will be justified, and his justice cleared, by those severe punishments that shall be eternally inflicted upon the wicked, that have forsaken the God of their salvation. And therefore this in a more especial manner is called *the day of the Lord.* The exact time of this general judgment being one of those seasons which the Father has put in his own power, it is not for us to know, or pry into it. Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. One thing the scripture assures us of, that it shall come suddenly, as a thief in the night; as the flood upon the old world; or as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when they were eating and drinking, and suspected nothing. That it is very near to every one of us, is also very evident: because, how many ages soever the world may continue, yet to every particular person the time of his own death must determine the conditions, upon which his sentence will depend at the general judgment. Nevertheless,

whatever be the time, how near or how distant soever, wherein the world is to end; it is (as I have said) the same thing to us: seeing our particular concern in the general judgment will depend entirely on the state wherein we ourselves leave the world, which we are very sure we must speedily do.

If we consult the light of nature only, it will discover to us an essential difference between good and evil; whence, by the common consent of mankind, rewards are affixed to the one, and punishments to the other: and according as men govern their actions in relation to these real differences of good and evil, so are their hopes and their fears in respect to a future state. A virtuous life is attended with present quiet and satisfaction, and with the comfortable hope of a future recompence; whereas the commission of any wicked action, though ever so secret, sits uneasy upon the mind, and fills it full of horror: all which would be very unaccountable, without the natural apprehension of future punishments and rewards. This is the reason why many of the heathens esteemed virtue and honesty dearer than life with all its advantages, and abhorred villainy and impiety worse than death itself. Moreover, the dispensations of God's providence toward men in this world are not confined: good men often suffer, even for the sake of righteousness; and bad men as frequently prosper and flourish, and that by the means of their wicked practices. Wherefore, to rescue God's proceedings with man from the imputation of injustice, it seems reasonable that there should be a future judgment, for a suitable distribution of punishments and rewards. From which we learn, that

God will reward and punish us in the next life, in proportion to the good or evil we shall do in this our mortal state. For in that day the degrees of good and bad actions will be considered, as well as their nature and quality. To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. So our Saviour plainly teaches us, by the parable of the talents, that men are rewarded according to the improvement they make: he that had gained ten talents

was made ruler over ten cities; and he that had gained five talents ruler over five cities. The apostle of the Gentiles expressly affirms, that the glory of the saints shall be different at the resurrection. And we are informed from our Saviour's own mouth, that in the day of judgment the condition of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah, shall be more tolerable, than that of impenitent sinners, who have heard and rejected the terms of salvation through Jesus Christ. By which we are instructed to believe the justice and equity of God's providence, and the reason of the thing; nothing being a greater promoter of piety than the consideration that the least service shall not lose its reward; and the better any man is, the greater disposition he hath for the enjoyment of God; and the more hardened he is in his wickedness the more susceptible he is of torment, and treasures up greater measures of wrath against the day of God's vengeance, at the last and general judgment.

Therefore we should govern our lives with that care and consideration, and with that due regard to the measures of our duty, as that we may be able to give up our accounts with joy, and not with grief: we should keep that strict watch over ourselves by frequent examination, as that our behaviour, in this state of probation and trial, may obtain the favour and acceptance of our judge at his dreadful judgment seat: we should restrain ourselves from committing the least sin, because there is none so inconsiderable as to be overlooked at that day of general account for all the world: nor should we encourage ourselves by the greatest secrecy to the breach of any of God's holy laws; because all our actions shall be then exposed to public view, and known to the whole world, to our eternal infamy: neither should we be dejected by the slanders and calumnies of bad men, because our integrity shall then be cleared by him who cannot err in the sentence he shall pass on us. But let us improve all those talents the providence of God hath intrusted us with; because we are but stewards, and must give an account of them all: let us be sincere in all our words and actions; because in that day the secrets of all hearts shall be opened: let us avoid all rash judging of others: because he

that judgeth another shall not escape the judgment of the Almighty: let us abound in such works as we know will particularly distinguish men at that day, as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, &c. because our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord: and let us be humble, and jealous over our own conduct; because, though we know nothing by ourselves, we are not thereby justified; for he that judgeth us is the Lord. And also we should learn immediately to reconcile ourselves to God by a sincere and hearty repentance, that the terrible day of God's wrath may not find us unprepared to enter into the joy of our Lord.

SUNDAY V.

I. *Of the* Holy Ghost, *his office, manner of working in us, our duty to him, and the sin against him.* II. *Of the* holy catholic church, *and* communion of saints. III. *Of the* forgiveness of sins; *when, and how to be obtained.* IV. *Of the* resurrection *of the* body, *with answers to objections against it; and the folly of* atheism. V. *Of the* life everlasting; *in which God's justice in punishing the wicked* eternally *is vindicated, and the inexcuseableness of sin is demonstrated.* VI. *The* doctrines of christianity *cannot be amended; and are not affected by the* wickedness *of some people's lives, nor by* religious disputes. VII. *That religion arose not from* fear, education, *or* state policy; *and the* miseries *of* atheism.

I. *Of the Holy Ghost.*

IN the *eighth* ARTICLE of our christian faith we profess to *believe in the* HOLY GHOST: for Christ before his passion had promised to send to his disciples the Holy Ghost, to guide them into all truth, and to show them things to come, and to glorify him: and, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were accordingly all

filled with the Holy Ghost; who is the third person in the most holy Trinity, distinct from the Father and the Son, and eternally proceeding from both; being called the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Son, as well as of the Father, and of one divine substance with them: holy in respect of his own divine nature; for as the Son was so begotten of the Father, as to be one God with him, in like manner, the Holy Ghost so proceedeth from the Father and the Son, that he is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father, and the Son, very and eternal God. His peculiar office, as we may understand by the title *holy*, is to sanctify and renew our corrupt nature, and to restore it to its primitive perfection and dignity; to incline us to receive those truths, which are only spiritually discerned, and are foolishness to a carnal or natural man; by opening our hearts, that we attend unto those things which were written by his inspiration, and spoken by holy men as they were moved by him; by working in us that faith, which is the gift of God, and which no one can have, but from the Holy Ghost; and by giving us that new birth or regeneration, without which we cannot see the kingdom of God, nor enjoy the possession of God's promises, reserved for believers in the next world. And consequently it is this blessed Spirit which gives clearness to our faith, zeal to our charity, and strength and power to every thing we think or do. For

Those helps and assistances, which are necessary for the performance of those conditions, upon which our salvation depends, are bestowed upon us by this divine Spirit; partly by illuminating our understandings in our sincere and diligent inquiries after divine truth; and partly by exciting our wills to that which is good, and strengthening our vigorous endeavours in the prosecution thereof: and these are to be obtained only by the use of those means, which God has established for this end; as humble, hearty, and fervent prayer; a frequent and devout use of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper; reading and hearing God's holy word; with the use of all other likely means to attain those graces, which we seek for at his hands: and all this as obedient mem-

bers of the communion of saints, to whom alone Christ hath promised these influences of the Holy Ghost, which he must feel or know to work in us.—When we constantly take care to demean ourselves as living members of that kingdom, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, our conversation will be in heaven, our delight in God; all our hopes, wishes, and desires will be fixed on things above, and we shall live that heavenly life here, the perfection whereof will be our happiness hereafter, in the kingdom of God and of his son Jesus Christ. For the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are represented to us as severally and in a distinct manner concurring to our salvation; for God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son; and through him we are admitted by one Spirit to the Father. And

We may judge of the necessity of this belief, in that it is taken from the very form of baptism, ordained by Christ himself. Besides, our belief in the Holy Ghost tends to excite in us a desire of those gifts and graces that flow from him, of that new birth from him which may wholly renew and spiritualize our souls; that being always led by him, and receiving supplies from him, and continuing in his holy fellowship, we may through him become such temples of God as he will choose to delight and dwell in. Therefore we should endeavour to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God; whose will is our sanctification, and who from the beginning hath chosen us to salvation, thro' sanctification of the Spirit, whom he sent to teach us his will, and to guide us in the way of truth. Therefore,

Our duty, with regard to the Holy Ghost, is to pray to God our Father continually for the assistance of this his holy spirit: whereby we may be enabled to overcome all the temptations of sin. We are to receive his testimony, as delivered down to us in the writings of the apostles and prophets; to obey his good motions; be solicitous to obtain his gifts and

graces, which are the habits of moral and christian virtues; and be careful, above all things, not to quench and grieve, and drive him from us, lest we be found to do despite unto the spirit of grace. There is one thing particularly needful to be here taken notice of: that to follow the guidance of the holy spirit is not to follow enthusiastic imaginations; but to be guided by that doctrine, which the Holy Ghost inspired the apostles to teach; and that we obey it in the practice of all moral and christian virtues, which are the fruits of the spirit. The apostles were directed by a miraculous assistance of the spirit upon every extraordinary occasion; but we have now no promise of any such miraculous direction. To obey the spirit now is to obey his dictates as delivered down to us in the inspired writings: and to be a good man is now the only evidence of being full of the Holy Ghost.

Every wilful act of sin, especially in a christian, is, in some sense, a sin against the Holy Ghost; it is a grieving, a quenching, a resisting, and doing despite to the spirit, in scripture language. Therefore, all sinning against the clear conviction of our consciences, and the motions and suggestions of the holy spirit to the contrary; all obstinacy in a vicious course of living, notwithstanding the motives and arguments of the gospel, to persuade men to repentance: all profane scoffing at religion, and making a mock of sin; all abuse of the scriptures, and ridiculing the holy word of God; all perverse infidelity, and malicious opposition of the truth, when the arguments for it are very plain and evident to every impartial mind; are crimes of a high nature, and of a near affinity to this great and unpardonable sin: and though God, to encourage the repentance of men, has not declared them irremissible; yet, where they once get possession of a man, they, by degrees, so waste the conscience, and corrupt the mind, as to make it incurable. They are, in short, great and grievous provocations to almighty God, and, if they be long persisted in, we know not how soon he may withdraw his grace from us, and suffer us to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

II. *Of the Holy Catholic Church.*

In the *ninth* ARTICLE of our christian faith we profess to believe in *the holy catholic church, the communion of saints*; because Christ promised to erect a church, when he said, On this rock will I build my church: and we find it mentioned as actually erected in that passage of the *Acts*, And God added to the church daily such as should be saved; which church then consisted of the twelve apostles, and other believers in Christ, continuing in their fellowship, and hearing together the word preached, and breaking bread from house to house, and joining in public prayers to the Almighty. Therefore as many as embrace and obey the gospel may be said to compose one church, in respect of their being members of the same body, and through one and the same spirit united unto one head, which is Christ; and built upon one foundation, the chief corner-stone whereof is Christ Jesus: and professing that holy faith, which is but one, and receiving the same sacraments, which are signs and badges of the people of God, whereby we being many, are united by one baptism, and are one bread and one body: also we are one, as being all called in one hope of our calling; and we ought also to be one, as keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and as united by one discipline and government, and guided by the same pastors in the way of eternal life. So that,

Howsoever the unity of the visible church may, through the weakness or perverseness of man, or the wiles of the devil, be defective in these last respects; yet all true and sincere believers are, and always have, and for ever shall be led by him the only good shepherd, their eternal high priest, king, and prophet, unto those heavenly mansions, where joy, peace, love, harmony, unity, happiness, and glory shall have no end. Moreover, it is reasonable to believe, that this one church hath a present existence, and that it hath continued from the times of the apostles, and

will continue to the end of the world, from those promises of our Lord, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and that he will be with his disciples always, even unto the end of the world. This whole christian church also may be well termed *holy*, as being separated from the rest of the world by a holy calling, and having holy offices, instituted by God, administered among them, and being more particularly obliged, by naming themselves by the name of Christ, to depart from iniquity, and to obtain that holiness without which no man can see the Lord: its members being predestinate to be conformed to the image of Christ, and efficaciously called by God, elect, sanctified, and justified; and shall be perfectly holy when they die.

The primitive fathers at first understood, by the *catholic* church, no more than the church in *general*, as composed of all particular churches. Therefore we call the epistles of Peter catholic, because they were directed to the church in general; and thus in succeeding ages they called those places of divine worship, wherein all persons of both sexes within a certain district met without distinction, catholic churches, in opposition to such private chapels as were erected by monks and friars. And again, the word catholic is sometimes applied to particular national churches, as professing the true faith with the rest of the church of God, in opposition to schismatics and heretics. Besides, the christian church may be also called catholic, as it is to be diffused into, and at last take in all nations, and is not confined to one nation, as the Jewish religion was, nor to one place, as the Jewish sacrifices and other priestly ministrations were.

To this church it is that we believe God hath added, and will continue to add, those that shall be saved: and as none were saved from the flood but those only who were in the ark of Noah; so we have no reason to think that any shall be saved from the wrath of the last day, and receive the glory promised to the saints, who are not found within the christian church. And therefore we ought to take the greatest

care that we be not excluded from it, either by justly incurring its censures by scandalous and incorrigible sins, or by falling into apostasy, heresy, or schism; and we ought to remember, that, as this church is holy, it will be impossible for us to be living members of it, unless we also are holy, without which our being outward members of it will be not only vain, but pernicious, and the highest aggravation of our crime; because the catholic church is the *communion of saints.*

Of the communion of saints. The larger sense of the word *saints* implies all those persons that are baptized into it and profess the christian faith, and are visible members of Christ's church. And, as the wheat grows in the same field with the tares, so the saint hath an external communion in the same church with the hypocrite; both are baptized with the same water, and eat at the same table the bread and wine which the Lord had commanded to be received; they hear the same doctrine, and openly profess the same faith; but they do not communicate in the same saving grace, nor in that faith which works by love, nor in the renovation of the mind and spirit of sinful man. And, whenever we profess this belief of the communion of saints, it ought to excite us to endeavour after the greatest purity and sanctity of life we can possibly attain; because we must turn from the power of Satan unto God, or we can have no inheritance among them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus. Moreover, this profession ought also to excite in all true believers the highest gratitude to God, who hath admitted them to fellowship with himself, made them partakers of the divine nature, and chosen them for the places of his abode, and mansions of eternal bliss. Besides, this profession ought also to inflame all true believers with the highest affection toward one another: for, if it be natural to love our brothers and sisters according to the flesh, how much more ought we to have the highest affection for those who are joined to us by a much nobler relation who are born again by the same spiritual birth with us, and live the same spiritual life, and are endued with the gracious influences

of the same holy spirit? and therefore, if we ought to do good to all men, surely much more so to them who are of the same household of faith, saints or members of the same communion, and partakers of the same privileges and promises with ourselves.

III. *Of the Forgiveness of Sin.*

In the *tenth* ARTICLE of our christian faith we confess a belief in the *forgiveness of sins*. It will therefore be necessary to enquire into the nature of sin; which consists in a man's suffering himself to be drawn away by the enticement of some appetite, passion, or interest, to do what he is sensible is not, in itself, fit and right; to do what his mind feels to be contrary to the law of God, made known to him either by reason or revelation; contrary to piety or godliness; contrary to sobriety or temperance; contrary to truth, justice, equity, or charity. Hence sin, in its own nature, even separate from the consideration of its being an obstinate disobeying the revealed will of God, is in itself utterly unreasonable and inexcusable. It is acting in opposition to the known reason and proportion of things, contrary to that eternal order and equity which God hath established in the original constitution of nature; opposite to the law of reason, the dictates of conscience, the unprejudiced judgment of our own minds, the agreeing opinion of all wise and good men, nay and even of bad men themselves too; contrary to all our natural notions and apprehensions of the attributes and will of God; destructive to the welfare and happiness of mankind, the health of our own bodies, the peace of our minds, and the support of our good name and reputation among wise and reasonable men. It is a subjecting our reason to vile affections, to inordinate and brutish appetites, to disorderly and ungoverned passions; which becomes a guilt, or a debt, to suffer such punishment as the iniquity of the offence deserves in justice from the lawgiver, which punishment could never be forgiven but through the satisfaction of Christ. And

That our sins are forgiven on account of this satisfac-

tion offered by Christ is plainly proved from those many texts of scripture which relate to this matter, and tell us, that without shedding of blood there is no remission; and that in the end of the world Christ once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; that by his stripes we are healed; that his blood was shed for many for the remission of sin; that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin; according to the riches of his grace: neither can this be any way inconsistent with those scriptures which make the love of God to men the inducement of his sending Christ into the world: he loved and pitied them, as his creatures, and in misery; and was offended with them, as sinners; and it was a mercy worthy himself to find for them a sacrifice equal to his infinite justice and holiness. Therefore

The great consolation of a christian centers in the assurance that our sins are blotted out by the merits of Christ; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: nay, God hath concluded all under sin; and unless he himself had shown us a way to happiness, we must for ever have remained under perplexities from the sense of our guilt, and fears of divine wrath. On the contrary, this doctrine of forgiveness of sins gives all believers the highest comfort and the greatest sense of the goodness of God, who has thus reconciled mercy to justice, and freely has released those debts we should never have been able to have paid to the offended Deity. And we should by these considerations be inflamed with the most exalted love of our heavenly Father, who has given his Son to die for us; this should raise in us the highest gratitude to the blessed Jesus, who became the Son of man, to make us the children of God, and should make us always remember that we are no longer our own, but are bought with a price, no less than the blood of Jesus. Yet Christ delivers no man from the punishment of sin, who is not first delivered from the service and dominion of it: therefore no man who continues in the service and dominion of sin, can expect to be delivered from the punishment thereof. Christ has indeed given himself a propitiatory sacrifice, a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation for the sins of the world; yet it is not

that the whole world, or that any particular persons, should absolutely and unconditionally be thereby excused from the punishment of sin: but that all those who, by true repentance, turn from sin, and become righteous, should obtain remission and reconciliation with God: for he did not die that he might indulge men in sin, but that he might save them from it. Christ has indeed brought life and immortality to light, and opened an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God: yet it is not that any unreformed and unrenewed nature should be made partaker of that spiritual happiness, or be admitted to have a share in those pure and undefiled rewards; but that those who have broken off their sins by repentance, and their iniquities by righteousness, should be entertained at the eternal supper of the Lamb. For as impossible as it is for God to cease to be holy, or for the purity of the divine nature to be reconciled to sin, so impossible it is for a wicked man to obtain remission while he continues wicked, or for a sinner to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Be not deceived, says St. Paul; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners; that is, no unrighteous person, that continues in the practice of any known sin, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Wherefore, as God has promised us the forgiveness of our sins on no other condition, but that of our sincere faith and repentance, and our forgiving the trespasses of our brethren against us, we must endeavour daily to die unto sin, that we may live unto God; and, as we expect forgiveness, we must be ready to forgive one another.

SUNDAY V. Part II.

IV. *Of the Resurrection of the Body.*

In the *eleventh* ARTICLE of our christian faith we profess a belief in *the resurrection of the body*: which we must believe as a necessary and infallible truth: that as it is appointed for all men once to die, so it is also

determined that all men should rise from death; a doctrine perfectly agreeable to right reason, and to our natural notions of the attributes of God. The generality of the heathens of old, and the infidels of latter times, make this one of their great objections against christianity upon the pretence of its impossibility. The heathens think it contrary to the course of nature, that any thing should return from a state of perfect corruption to its proper form, or that a body perfectly dead should be again restored to life. And it is true, that among the works of nature they could never observe any action or operation that did or could produce such an affect; so that by natural light we cannot discover that God will raise the dead; for, that depending upon the will of God, it can be no otherwise known than by his own declarations; yet this doctrine, when made known by revelation, evidently contains nothing in it contrary to right reason. For we are to consider the possibility of things, not so much depending upon the power of nature, as upon the power of the God of nature. And whatever dark or imperfect notions the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, had of a future state, it is certain that life and immortality is now brought to light by the gospel; and we may rest assured, that though, when we die, our bodies shall be laid in the cold chambers of the grave, and there become the food of worms, and moulder into dust and rottenness; yet it will not be long before this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. For God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. A day wherein we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. And then all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. And it may be proved, by the creation of the world out of nothing, that it is altogether as easy for God to raise the body,

again after death, as to create and form it at first; it being a less effect of power to raise a body when resolved into dust, or wheresoever dispersed and destroyed, than to make all things out of nothing by a single command.

I know there is a popular objection, which at first view may carry some difficulty in it against this article of our faith; as for example: How can bodies devoured by men-eaters, who live on human flesh; or bodies eaten by fishes, and turned to their nourishment, and those fishes eaten by men, and converted into the substance of their bodies; recover their own bodies at the resurrection of the dead?

Wherefore, to clear this difficulty, among many other sufficient proofs, it must be considered, that the body of man is no other than a successive thing, continually losing something of the matter it had before, and gaining new; so that it is certain from experience, that men frequently change their bodies, and that the body a man hath at any time of his life is as much his own body, as that which he hath when death separates body and soul. Therefore, if the matter of the body which a man had at any time of his life be raised, it is as much his own and the same body as that which he had at his death; which does clearly solve the forementioned difficulty, since any of those bodies he had at any time before he was eaten were as much his own as that which was eaten. Moreover, let it be considered, that in like manner as in every grain of corn there is contained a small imperceptible seed, or natural faculty, which is itself the entire future blade and ear, and in due season, when all the rest of the grain is corrupted, unfolds itself visibly into the form; so our present mortal and corruptible body may be but the out-coat, as it were, of some hidden and at present imperceptible part of nature, which at the resurrection shall discover itself in its proper form, by which way also in nature there cannot possibly be any confusion of bodies: therefore it is not without some weight, that St. Paul made use of the same comparison, and that the same similitude is alledged by the ancient fathers of the church. But should we, as we ought, consider the

things without us; the natural changes and chances in every thing and person will raise the probability of our resurrection from the dead. At night the day dies, and rises with the next morning; the summer dies into winter, when the earth becomes a general sepulchre, but when the spring appears, nature revives and flourishes; the corn lies buried in the ground, and being corrupted, revives and multiplies. And can we think that man, the lord of all these things that die and revive for him, should be kept under the bands of death, never to rise again? which though it appeared impossible to many of the heathens, yet some of the wisest of them have thought otherwise, as their works declare. At the resurrection, every man shall be as really and truly the same person that died, as in the morning he that awakes is the same person that went to sleep at night.

If we search the scriptures, we shall find plainly, that the resurrection of the body, from divine revelation, is clear. God hath not only promised it, but in several instances exemplified it for our satisfaction. I know, says Job, that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, &c. And the prophet Daniel tells us, that many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Besides, if these proofs will not take place, let them hearken unto fact. The ears of the Lord were open to the voice of Elijah, for the dead child of the widow of Sarepta; for, when he prayed, the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. Elisha raised the child of the Shunamite from death: nor did that power he had die together with him; for, when they were burying a man, they cast him into the sepulchre of Elisha, and when the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet. These are examples out of the Old Testament. But,

If we search the gospels, we shall find that remarkable argument of our saviour Christ himself, when he put the Sadducees to silence: As touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken

unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living: which argument astonished the multitude, and silenced the Sadducees. And if it does not astonish and silence the infidels and Socinians of our days, they must be accounted more hardened in their unbelief than the Sadducees of old, who could not reply to so cogent a proof of the resurrection. And again, he cautions his disciples to fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell. If then the body is capable of torment in hell, it must be raised from the grave, and united to its soul again, before it can pass from the grave to that state of punishment. He promises a recompence, at the resurrection of the just, to those that relieve the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame: he positively declares in St. John, that the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation: he calls himself the resurrection and the life. And we are told in the Revelation, that the sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and death and the grave deliver up the dead which are in them, in order to be judged, every man according to his works. And St. Paul, defending himself before the Roman governor, openly professes his belief of the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. To some of the philosophers this apostle also appeared to be a setter-forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection: and he declares, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; and that the Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. The same apostle, to the Thessalonians, describes the manner of the resurrection, that the dead in Christ shall rise first: and, with the Corinthians, he argues from the certainty of Christ's resurrection to the necessity of ours: which texts sufficiently prove that the resurrection of the body was delivered as a necessary ar-

ticle of faith from the beginning of christianity, and that it is still the expectation of the faithful; for, if the dead rise not, christians are of all men most miserable. Which doctrine was confirmed, when our Saviour restored to life the ruler of the synagogue's daughter; and raised up the widow's only son that was dead; and by restoring to life his friend Lazarus, who had been dead and buried four days: but all these instances were exceeded in our Saviour's own resurrection, which so infinitely manifested his power and divinity. So that there can be no doubt of the truth of the resurrection from the dead. And it is certain that this resurrection will be universal: all mankind that have laid down their own bodies, and committed them to the grave, shall receive them again; there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

From what has been said it appears, that the folly of those, who have no other hope to rest upon but that of atheism and infidelity, is greater than can be expressed in words, or that can rightly be conceived by any imagination. For what is the state of such a person, when God taketh away his soul? can he be sure there is no God? or can he demonstrate to himself, that there will be no future state? The hardiest unbeliever never yet pretended to have demonstration in this case: and, if he had, yet all the comfort, all the hope, that could be built even upon that, would be but the hope of a beast, the expectation of perishing as if he had never been. For what is the hope of the unbeliever, when God takes away his soul? I should say, when fate or chance takes away his soul? and on what ground can the confidence of the atheist rely? his expectations at best are thin as a spider's web; and his hopes as the light chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth. His prosperity and mirth can be but for a moment, and his adversity must of necessity terminate in despair. For what relief is to be expected from fate or chance, which has no understanding? and what support is that man capable of in the day of affliction, who

does not believe things are guided by a wise hand, which can turn every thing finally to our advantage?

The bodies of good christians, now liable to pains and diseases, and death, shall then die no more, but shall be equal unto the angels; like them, they shall become immortal in their duration, and consequently freed from all those troublesome accidents to which they are now exposed; for the reward being eternal, the subject of it must be eternal also. Therefore, says the apostle, it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. The bodies of good men, though now vile and corruptible, subject to filth and deformity by nature, shall be raised glorious, splendid, and bright; they shall shine like the sun, and shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of our blessed Saviour: though now subject to weariness, to impotency, and to decays, shall be raised nimble, strong, and active; they shall be able to follow the Lamb wherever he goeth: they shall be endowed with such strength and vigour, as shall support them for ever in the same state, without any decay or change. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. Though the body is now actuated by vital spirits, it shall then be possessed and actuated by the holy spirit; it shall be refined, and become a proper instrument for the operations of our minds, upon whom they must serve and depend. It is sown a natural body, but it is raised a spiritual body. Yet the bodies of the wicked will be fitted to that eternal punishment they have drawn upon themselves, wherein they will always suffer, without consuming, under that dreadful sentence, Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire! Therefore,

This faith of the resurrection of the body should make us reverence ourselves, and not pollute our bodies with sensual and brutish lusts, but by purity and sobriety prepare them for that honour and happiness they are designed for: it should support us under those miseries and infirmities our bodies are subject to in this life; since, when we take them up again, they shall be no more liable to pains or diseases, or to dissolution; for death will be swallowed up in victo-

ry. By this faith we are comforted upon the death of our religious friends and relations, who are not perished but fallen asleep, and shall awake again in greater perfection and glory at the last day. This should influence us to promote not only our own, but the improvement of saving knowledge as far as lies in our power, to curb vice and encourage virtue, especially among those with whom we have any friendship or authority. This should arm us against the fear of our own death, since we are assured, that after our bodies are crumbled into dust, they shall be quickened at the general resurrection, and be changed, and made glorified bodies, by the mighty power of God. And especially this should make us exercise ourselves to keep consciences void of offence; both toward God and man, that we may not forfeit that blessed immortality of our whole man, body and soul, which our blessed Saviour hath promised to all those that persevere in his service all the days of their mortal life.

V. *Of Life Everlasting.*

In the *twelfth* ARTICLE of our christian faith we profess to believe that there is a *life everlasting*: a life that comprehends an everlasting duration, to which all shall be raised after death, the wicked as well as the righteous. Therefore, when we read that the wicked shall be destroyed, and perish, and for ever die, we are to understand, not that they shall be turned into nothing, but that they shall forever lose the presence and favour of God; be condemned to a a wretched, hopeless state of anguish, remorse, and despair; and be tortured with the worm that never dies, and in the fire that shall never be quenched. But the righteous shall receive the utmost perfection, of which their nature is capable; they shall partake of the glory which the Father has given to the Son; and shall be one, as the Father and Christ are one. For

The life and immortality, which Christ hath brought to light, and which he hath promised to all his faithful disciples, is a translation from a state of dulness

and anxiety, trouble, affliction, disappointments, vexations, real grief, solid cares, and at the best of imaginary pleasures to a state of true happiness and contempt, of manly and rational pleasures: pleasures not interrupted by sickness or any sad accidents, not dulled by being weary of them, nor cloyed with them, not disturbed either by the insults of our enemies or the concernments for our miserable friends, or our own inequality of temper. In that state all the powers and faculties of our souls will be advanced to the highest perfection they are capable of; and we shall live in perfect ease and peace, in perfect freedom and liberty, in the perfect enjoyment of ourselves. Then our bodies, that slept in the dust, shall be raised again and united to our souls, to live in the city of the great King, the heavenly Jerusalem, a paradise of pleasure, a country of perpetual light and bliss, where the glory of the Lord fills the place, and where every object that presents itself adds a new beauty to it, and contributes to the increase of our delight. But

Reasons for eternal punishments. To complete the whole, we are assured that the inheritance we expect is incorruptible, and fadeth not away; that our house in heaven is eternal; and that death shall have no more power over us. There is no dispute concerning the everlasting happiness of the righteous; it being evident, that God in his infinite bounty may reward the sincere obedience of his creatures as much beyond the merit of their own weak and imperfect works as he sees proper. Yet the everlasting punishment threatened to the wicked has seemed to many a great difficulty; since it is certain, from our natural notions of the attributes of God, that no man shall be punished beyond the just demerit of his transgression. But those who consider the nature of human actions must confess that God is just, and that every one who wilfully offends him deserves eternal punishment: because a rational and moral man not only has in himself a power of acting, which is in common to him with the irrational creatures; but he has moreover a still higher principle or power of directing

his actions, with some determinate views, and to some certain and constant end. He has a power of judging beforehand, concerning the consequences of his actions, concerning the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the end he aims at; and he has a power of recollecting, after the action is done, whether he acted with a good or an evil view. He can either follow the irregular motions of all his appetites and passions, as do the beasts that perish; or he can restrain and overrule their solicitation, by attending to the guidance of a superior light of reason and religion. Nay, a man cannot indeed but have some view and design in every thing he does: even when he abandons himself most implicitly to the brutal guidance of mere appetite and passion, still he does it with some view; and with a consciousness, which beasts have not, that he knowingly and deliberately chooses to aim at some mean and unworthy end. Hence arises that judgment of reflection which we call conscience; by which a man either approves or condemns his own past actions, and apprehends, that he shall accordingly be approved or condemned by him also to whom he must finally give an account of himself. If a man, in the general course of his life, accustoms himself to consider these things before hand, that is, if he will behave himself as a rational creature; if he accustoms himself in all his actions to consider the reason and equity of things, to consider what is reasonable for himself to do, or for him to expect should be done by another; to consider what is agreeable to the will of God, and likely to be approved at the bar of an impartial and all-seeing judge: if this, I say, be his main directing principle, and the point which he constantly keeps in view, his actions, generally speaking, will not fail to be virtuous and good.

On the contrary, if a man's principles be loose and atheistical; if he has no sense of the reason and equity of things, nor apprehension of the righteous judgment of God; if his views are only the satisfying of his appetites, the gratification of his passions, the pursuing his present interest, and pleasing his own unrea-

sonable self-will, it cannot be but his actions will be generally immoral and vicious.

And as there was never any person in any age or country upon earth, but judged himself injured by any violence or fraud put by another upon himself, the case is precisely the same, whenever any fraud or violence is used by him toward another; and therefore the judgment passed by him in that case upon other men, is in fact a judgment passed by him upon himself. The same may be said concerning any other known instance of wickedness; concerning every kind of impiety, unrighteousness, or debauchery: the person who commits the crime always condemns himself, and is conscious that he deserves to be punished. Men may divert and turn away their thoughts from the unpleasing subject, by variety of amusements, and numberless vain imaginations: they may flatter themselves as they please with objections against the unalterable and essential differences of virtue and vice; and resolve to say within themselves, though they can never really be persuaded of it, that they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their own heart, to add one sin to another, they may confidently and presumptuously dispute and argue in general, that all actions are naturally and originally alike; that morality is but a fiction of speculative men; and the notion of vice and virtue only a creature of the laws or customs of nations. But the judgment in particular that every wicked man necessarily and immediately makes concerning any unjust action of another, by which he himself happens to suffer, will for ever convict him of knowing well that difference of moral good or evil, which he is not willing to acknowledge, or which, however, he is not willing to make the rule of his own behaviour. This is what the apostle calls the law written in men's heart, by which they are a law unto themselves, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or excusing one another; therefore it is certain men are naturally conscious of the difference of good and evil, and of the consequent desert

of their own actions: it is natural for them to apprehend, that this judgment of their own consciences is the judgment that God also passes upon them; and the scripture very clearly affirms that it is so.

The sense of guilt is so necessarily uneasy upon the mind of man, that even the most hardened sinners are perpetually endeavouring to shift off the blame of their wickedness from themselves, and to throw the fault upon whatever comes in their way. Sometimes the reason of their wickedness is because God has not made them better than they are: And who has resisted his will? Sometimes it is the devil that tempts them; And how can frail men withstand so potent and so cunning a deceiver? Sometimes it is the original corruption of their nature: And who can alter the condition to which he was born? Sometimes it is the general fashion and custom of the world: And who can be singular in opposing so violent a torrent? The apostle cuts off at once both these and all other excuses, by determining distinctly, that, whatever aggravations or extenuations of sin may or may not arise from external circumstances, yet sin in itself, the nature and essence of sin, consists entirely in the free choice of a man's own will; and that his guilt is always just so much in proportion as his choice deviates from the dictates of his reason. For, though the sensibility of our conscience, whereby we become uneasy at the commission of any crime, may be deadened by a long perseverance in vice: yet the light of our conscience, whereby we discern the difference between good and evil, can perhaps be never totally put out. But this we may do, and this, if we are wise, we will do: we may by repeated endeavours, by degrees, subdue our vicious inclinations to our reason. Every man is then only tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed.

Let it therefore be observed, first, that no man can say it is unreasonable, that they, who by wilful and stubborn disobedience to their almighty Creator and most merciful Benefactor, and by the habitual practice of unrepented wickedness, have, during the state of trial, made themselves unfit for the enjoyment of that happiness,

which God has prepared for them that love and obey him, should be entirely rejected and excluded therefrom. As to the continuance of the punishment, no man can presume, in our present state of ignorance and darkness to be able truly to judge, barely by the strength of his own natural reason, what in this respect is or is not consistent with the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of the supreme Governor of the world; since we neither know the place, nor kind, nor manner, nor circumstances, nor degrees, nor all the ends and uses of the final punishment of wicked men. But we are certain that the justice of God will abundantly vindicate itself, and all mouths shall be stopped before him, and be forced to acknowledge the exact righteousness of all his judgments, and to condemn their own folly and wickedness; forasmuch as the degree or severity of the punishments which shall be inflicted on the impenitent, shall be exactly proportionate to their sins, as a recompence of their crime; so that no man shall suffer more than he has deserved, by the evil of its ways. For argument sake, let us suppose that men are to live here for ever, and that some of them were become abandoned and incorrigibly bad: Would it be any unjustifiable severity to confine them for ever in prison, that they might not seduce or annoy the rest of the creation; or even to inflict positive punishments upon them, in their confinement, adequate to their offences, in order to deter others? It is only therefore to suppose, that the soul is in its own nature designed for an immortal duration: that those, who are consigned to everlasting misery, are such as by a continued course of sinning have so disabled all the powers of the soul, that it is morally impossible for them, without the extraordinary grace of God, to cease from sinning: and then, if it be no injustice, as undoubtedly it is not, that every sinner should be a sufferer; there can be no injustice, that every habitual, eternal sinner should be an eternal sufferer. Suppose again, that the outward acts of sin are temporary; yet the defilement and habit contracted by a repetition of these acts are, if we die in a state of impenitence, eternal. And as eternal ill habits are the source of eternal torments; it will follow that the impenitent

have entailed upon themselves everlasting misery. And, finally, let those, who insist so much upon it, that the punishment is disproportioned to the crime, consider sin in all views, and in all its consequences, which is the only way to form a true judgment of the malignity of it. For the punishment is not disproportioned to sin; habitual sin, if considered with all its numerous train of ill consequences; the consequences being such, that, if unrestrained, it would soon involve the whole world in one promiscuous ruin and desolation. It is true, one man cannot do all this mischief. But then one man, who, for instance, acts unjustly, contributes his part to the introduction of universal disorder and misery. If all should act as unjustly as himself (and all have as much right as any one man) the foundations of the moral world would be quite out of course. For, as a late writer observes, 'one person robs another of a small sum of money; he is taken and suffers death for the fact: Now, what proportion is there between the punishment and the crime; between depriving a man of what perhaps he could very well spare, and depriving the person that did it of his life, and of his all in this world? None at all, if we consider the crime in this light only; but if we view it in all its tendencies, then the crime is adequate to the punishment, since it tends to render property, and what is valuable in this life precarious, and to subvert the peace of society.' We know not, we cannot know, how far the consequences of any one sin may extend, how far the influence of our behaviour may effect all that lie within the sphere of our activity, those beneath us, and about us, our domestics, relations, and neighbours. And these again may spread the contagion further.

The influence of eternal Punishment. This faith, therefore, in a life everlasting, should deter us from sin, and excite us to repentance and holiness of life; and breed in us an awe of the great God, a jealous God, a consuming fire, a God who will not be mocked. This should teach us to tremble at his word, at the fierceness of his wrath, and the dreadfulness of his vengeance; and to set the highest value on the plenteous redemption wrought out for us by the blood of Christ, whereby al

true believers are purged from their sins, and not only freed from eternal misery, but made inheritors of eternal happiness. This should inflame our souls with earnest desires of those heavenly joys which flow from the vision of God, and stir up our endeavours after that holiness without which it can be enjoyed by no man. This should teach us to contemn this world, and to set our affections on things above; so that forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we may press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ. This should encourage us take up the cross of Christ, and make us cheerful under the sufferings of this life, knowing that they are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us: and that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Therefore,

Hearken not to the suggestions of designing men. Under a pretence of banishing your apprehensions of a future judgment, they will only dash your hopes, and weaken your expectation of a blessed immortality; alarming those very apprehensions, which they promised to remove, by adding to your other terrors this new fear, which will continually haunt you; a fear, lest you have sinned in dismissing your first persuasion for very slight and frivilous reasons.

VI. *Of the Doctrines of Christianity.*

There may be several, who have just sense enough to see there are difficulties in christianity; but not sense enough to see they are but difficulties: and these may be confirmed infidels, mere reeds shaken with the wind, with every blast of vain doctrine. The christian religion proposes no doctrines for our belief, but such as are discovered by revelation, and most agreeable to a sound and unbiassed judgment, Notwithstanding the strictest scrutiny has been made, and every particular passage has been sifted, no one material flaw has been discovered, that has endangered the whole fabric. Nay those very things, which were thought insuperable ob-

jections against it, have, upon a closer examination, been found illustrious confirmations of the truth of it. And if all the load of objections and difficulties industriously raised, like so many weights tied about a body, cannot sink christianity; it must be upheld and supported by that energy of truth, which is stronger than all things, and will prevail. Many are the devices of a man's heart; but the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever. Many have been the devices of men's hearts and heads against christianity: from its youth up have they fought against it: but it is the counsel of the Lord, and therefore has hitherto stood, and will maintain its ground.

All the doctrines of our Saviour have a natural tendency, and a direct and powerful influence to reform men's lives, and correct their manners. None of them were calculated for the gratification of men's idle curiosities, the busying and amusing them with airy and useless speculation; much less were they intended for an exercise of our credulity, or a trial how far we could bring our reason to submit to our faith: but as, on the one hand they were plain and simple, and such as, by their agreeableness to the rational faculties of mankind, did highly recommend themselves to our belief; so, on the other hand, they had an immediate relation to practice, and were the proper ground and foundation upon which all human and divine virtues were naturally to be built. The present wickedness of christians cannot be owing to any defect in the doctrine of Christ, nor be urged as a proof of the real inefficiency of it toward rendering men holy: because there was a time, when it had all the success of this kind that could be expected; the time, I mean, of its earliest appearance in the world; when the practice of the generality of christians was a just comment on the precepts of Christ: when they could appeal from their doctrines to their lives, and challenge their worst enemies to show any remarkable difference between them: when they were so far from injustice and wrong, and the several wicked arts of deceiving, that in the vast multitude of converts no man said that aught was his own; for they had all things common, and were not only of one faith, and of one worship, but of one

heart, and of one soul. Now, if the efficacy and power of the christian doctrine must be tried by its fruits, the gospel is the same *now* as it was *then*, equally the power of God unto salvation, equally mighty in pulling down of strong holds; and therefore, that it doth not still produce the same effects must be owing, not to any defect in the means, but to other causes. For the gospel, though it be the great instrument of holiness, yet can make those alone holy, who consider and weigh it, and fasten its holy rules upon their hearts and consciences by meditation and study. It is very hard therefore to make our faith answerable for the ill manners of those who do not in good earnest receive it: but much harder still, that those very men should press the objection most eagerly, without whose loose and immoral lives there would not be near so much ground and colour for it. Consequently by scripture, and by reason, religious opinions are to be examined; and not by the lives and practice of those who espouse them. Disputes it is true, there will always be about revelation, as there have been about every thing else. And is it any wonder men should dispute about religion, which is almost the only thing, about which it is worth while to dispute at all? If religion were set aside would all disputes immediately cease? No, there would be many more, which a serious sense of it upon our minds prevents, about things of less importance, about every thing on which men had misplaced their esteem. It is a mistake to imagine, that the obscurity of scripture has given birth to different opinions in material points; men's preconceived opinions have made them endeavour to obscure and darken the scripture, though never so plain. And, notwithstanding the many differences and disputes about particular doctrines among Christians (excepting such as have intolerably corrupted the very fundamental doctrines and even the main design itself of the whole christian dispensation) they have not been like those among the philosophers, concerning the whole scheme and system of things, but only concerning particular explications of particular doctrines; which kind of disputes do not at all affect the certainty of the whole religion itself, nor aught in reason to be any man-

ner of hindrance to the effect, which the plain and weightier and confessedly more important fundamental doctrines ought to have upon the hearts and lives of those who profess their belief in God, and acknowledge it their duty to obey his commands. The principles of Christianity may be out of fashion: but what they want in the fashion they make up in weight, solidity, and intrinsic worth.

Religion arose not from fear. To those unhappy advocates of infidelity, who would gravely pretend to persuade the world, that *religion*, at first, arose from *fear*, *education*, and *state policy*; and that it is only a polite device, to keep the ignorant people in awe; to these deluded men, I say, it may be sufficient to reply that even their own objection admits that religion conduces very much to the support of government and order in the world, and consequently is very beneficial to mankind in general; and so, to every man in particular, where its duties and obligations are duly observed, it gives such a peace and tranquillity of mind, and such a firmness and resolution of heart, as is utterly inconsistent with that groundless and unreasonable *fear*, which is here supposed to be parent of it. We own that *education*, and the prevalence of custom art great, but then they must be such as strike in with our corrupt passions and affections; and not such as endeavour to restrain and control them.—What goes against the grain can never last long; and therefore we may reasonably suppose, that *religion*, which gives such a check to our depraved appetites, had long since been exterminated the world, had it not laid such fast hold upon our natures, that there is no shaking it off.

The folly and miseries of atheism. Every age, we know, is apt to condemn the wisdom of those that preceded it: and, whether we stand upon our forefathers shoulders or not, we certainly think that we see farther. It is wonderful, therefore, that, in so many ages as have passed, no person has been able to make such a discovery of the artifice of religion, as to free mankind from its pretended slavery. It can-

not be said, *that there were none to attempt it:* because efforts of this kind have been frequent though always unsuccessful and redounding to the greater confirmation of religion. It cannot be said, *that there were none ready to join in such a design*; for all bad men wish there was no kind of religion, and what they wish for they are willing to effect, if they could. How comes it then, after all, that religion still prevailed, and the terrors of a Deity could not be shaken off, no not by the greatest politicians themselves, who thought they understood all the arts of government, as well as any that went before them? If the principles of religion had been first introduced merely by a *state policy*, the politicians and governors of the world, one would think, should be likely to have known something of it; at least, so much, as to be less subject to the anxieties of *conscience*, which the despising of such *principles*, and living in opposition to them, generally creates: whereas we find, on the contrary, that, in all ages, the greatest of men, who have had nothing to fear from human power, have been as much affrighted by the secret terrors of religion, and have undergone as great agonies of mind, as the meanest mortals. And, as the reason of the thing is sufficient to convince us, that religion at first was no state juggle; so, if we look into the records of antiquity, we shall easily perceive, that the farther we go backward, the stronger is our evidence against this suggestion. The most ancient writings, that are in the world, without all controversy, are those of the holy scriptures; and, among these, the book of *Job*, is deservedly accounted one of the earliest: and yet we may observe therein not only the sense of the duties of religion, wherewith the people were possessed in those days, but even how customary it was to appeal to the tradition of former times concerning these matters: *Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age* (says one of *Job's* friends) *and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing.* But what is it for, that he thus appeals to the observation of former ages? Even to

evince the bad condition of all that are not sincere in their religion; for *as the rush*, says he, *without mire, and the flag without water, wither before other herbs: so are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.* From whence it is apparent that, in the earliest times we can read of, men had the same sense of religion, and the same notions of God's indignation against impiety, that we now have: and therefore considering that no time or place can be assigned to give any reasonable ground for supposing, that the first principles of religion were any human contrivance, we may, without further arguments, conclude that they were from the beginning.

In fine, if religion had been a trick and contrivance of so long a date, as these deluded men pretend, it must necessarily have been found out at one time or other, and banished out of the world long before now: but the credit of it is not yet extinct; which can be owing to nothing but the invincible reasons whereon it stands. In every age there has not been wanting the wit and malice of profane persons, to undermine and blow it up; but the foundations, whereon it is built, are so firm and stable, and have endured the violent shocks and secret attempts of so many ages, that we have no occasion to doubt it will ever fail.—Were *religion* and *the being of a God* matters of mere *speculation* indeed, these men might trifle and sport with them, as long as they pleased; but, as they are made fundamental parts of every man's *salvation*, they seem to run too great a hazard, for the bare gratification of a *foolish singularity*, who adventure to deny them. For, as these men cannot fancy things into being, so neither can they make them vanish into nothing, by the stubborn confidence of their own imagination. What then can make them thus foolhardy, and tempt them to be thus desperate? If you believe them, *it is to set the world free from the prejudices of vulgar errors, and the slavery of that bug bear conscience.* Ah wretched freedom! which, to deliver us from *one imaginary* evil brings upon us a *thousand real* mischiefs, which degrades the dignity

of human nature, saps the foundation of all societies, opens a sluice to all kinds of wickedness, and takes away our only comfort in time of distress. For, since man of himself is insufficient for his own happiness; is liable to many evils and miseries, which he can neither prevent nor redress; is full of wants, which he cannot supply; surrounded with infirmities, which he cannot remove, and obnoxious to dangers, which he can no ways escape; where can he turn himself without a God, or where repose his anxious thoughts, but in his divine providence? In the day of adversity, especially, when all other friends are apt to forsake him, how gloomy must every thing about him look without a God! An unhappy mortal, deep sunk in miseries and misfortunes, and struggling with innumerable hardships here upon *earth*, and at the same time destitute of a protector and patron in *heaven*, is a condition not to be imagined without *horror* and *trembling amazement*.

SUNDAY VI.

I. *Of the sacrament of the* Lord's supper *why it was ordained; and* II. *Of the preparation* before *receiving it, by* examination *of conscience,* repentance, faith, obedience, *and making* satisfaction. III. *Of those duties to be done at the time of receiving,* and IV. After *receiving; and the benefit of* frequent *communion.* V. *Of the honour due to* God's name; *and of the sins against it, as* blasphemy, swearing, *including assertory, promissory, and unlawful oaths.* VI. *Of* perjury. VII. *Of* vain *oaths, or* common swearing, cursing, *and the sin of them; and* VIII. *Of* vows.

I. *Of the Lord's Supper.*

HAVING thus learned, and resolved to believe all the ARTICLES of the *christian faith,* our next duty is to partake of the *Lord's supper,* which as we are taught by the church, 'is not only a sign of the love that christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread, which we brake, is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner: and the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper, is faith. And therefore this is justly reckoned one of the most important actions of our holy religion; whereby we repeat and renew the covenant we made with God in our *baptism*; distinguish ourselves to be the disciples of the blessed Jesus; and are admitted to the highest act of communion with his sacred person: for therein our corrupt nature is

purified, by applying the merits of Christ's blood; and our weakness is strengthened, by receiving the influence of his grace, which he has purchased for us by his death.

But he that lives in the habitual practice of any known sin, without repentance, must not approach to the holy table, lest he be found to mock God, and contemn his authority. Nevertheless it may not be inferred, that the danger of unworthily receiving makes it safest to abstain from receiving at all, or at least to receive but seldom; because the danger of neglecting a plain command of our Saviour is more hazardous to our salvation, than performing it without some due qualification to make it worthy. For the clearer understanding of this matter, it may be necessary to take notice, that since it is allowed on all hands, that there can be no just bar to frequency of communion, but the want of preparation, which is only such a bar as men may themselves remove if they please; it concerns them highly to take off the impediment as soon as possible, and not to trust to vain hopes of alleviating one fault by committing another. The danger of misperforming any religious duty is an argument of fear and caution, but no excuse for neglect: God insists upon the doing it, and the doing it well also. It was no sufficient plea for the slothful servant, under the gospel, that he thought his master hard to please, and thereupon neglected his duty: but, on the contrary, the use he ought to have made of that consideration was to have been so much the more diligent in his master's service. Therefore, in the case of the holy communion, it is to very little purpose to plead the strictness of self-examination, or preparation, by way of excuse either for a total, or for a frequent, or for a long neglect of it. A man may say, that he comes not to the Lord's table, because he is not prepared; and so far he assigns a good reason: but if he should be further asked, why he is not prepared, when he may; then he can only make some trifling excuse, or remain speechless. Therefore, the duty being necessary to be performed, the true consequence we should draw from the danger of performing it unworthily, should be to excite ourselves to care and diligence in preparing ourselves for the due discharge of

it; but never to delude ourselves by false reasons to such a neglect as will certainly increase our guilt.

There lies an *obligation* upon *all* christians to receive the holy communion, from the plain and positive command of our Saviour, to do this in remembrance of him. This makes it a necessary and perpetual duty incumbent upon all christians: and to live in the neglect of a plain law of the author of our religion is no wise consistent with the character we profess of being the disciples of Christ. This worship is peculiar to the christian religion, and thereby, in a particular manner, we proclaim ourselves followers of the blessed Jesus: upon which account the primitive christians (in some places) never held their public assemblies without it; and the faithful, that joined in all the other parts of public worship, never failed in partaking of the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Yet the church declares, that 'the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing. Before we can be qualified to participate of this holy sacrament, we must understand the nature and end of its institution, or we cannot offer an acceptable service to God. And, therefore,

Remember that the sacrament of the Lord's supper *was ordained for a continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.* The Son of God made man, by suffering death upon the cross, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; he intercedes for us by virtue of this sacrifice in heaven; so we on earth should commemorate this his sacrifice on the cross, by offering bread and wine, which after consecration become the representatives of his body and blood, which in this sacrament are offered to God the Father, that he may be favorable to us, and give us his grace, through the merits of the death of Christ. And,

II. *Preparation for the Lord's Supper.*

As we ought not, and must not neglect coming to this holy sacrament, so nobody must dare to approach that holy table without a due preparation; carefully weighing what is necessary to be done, *before*, *at*, and *after* receiving the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. And, first,

Let a man examine his life and conversation by the rule of God's word. For a life governed by the precepts of the gospel is the best preparation for this sacrament; because he that believes the christian religion, and makes it his constant business to perform what our Saviour hath enjoined, has all that substantial preparation, which qualifies christians to partake of this ordinance, and ought therefore to receive when any opportunities present: for this holy sacrament does not so much oblige us to new duties, as it enables us to make good those obligations, which we in our baptism have promised and vowed to perform. Let a man therefore examine himself ever so much, fast ever so strictly, and pray ever so fervently, if his life has not been pious toward God, just toward his *neighbour*, and sober in reference to *himself:* without effectual resolutions, all those duties, in which he employs himself before he receives, will never be able to make him a fit guest at God's table: they are indeed good preparative helps, when they repair those breaches sin has made in our souls; but, without steady purposes of amendment, they are of no value in the sight of God, and will not be able to qualify us for a worthy participation of the body and blood of Christ. If our lives prepare not the way for our offerings, we approach the holy altar in vain. We should hereby be deterred from receiving only out of custom, or in order to qualify ourselves for some temporal or worldly employment; but pious christians, who are sincerely wearied and grieved with the burden of their sins, ought not to be discouraged in their duty; because here they will find their proper remedy; here they will meet with that strength and assistance, which is so necessary to enable them to lead

that holy life, which they purpose for the time to come, beginning it with a strict examination of the state of their own souls. Concerning which take these directions:

Recollect your baptismal vow, and endeavour to rivet in your soul a just sense of those mercies promised on God's part, and the particular duties to which you in common with all christians are obliged thereby: for our chief business at the Lord's table is to renew our baptismal covenant with God. Then inquire by your conscience, the candle of the Lord, how you have broken that covenant made in your baptism, either by thought, word, or deed. We transgress by our thoughts, when we are contriving and compassing any forbidden thing: but irregular thoughts, which spring up in your minds, and are but little in our power, they are neither sins nor matter of punishment, any further than they are causes and principles of a sinful choice and resolution; because as we assent or dissent to those motions that are in our minds, so will our thoughts be virtuous or sinful. But it is not enough to know what is sin: for we must also understand the true state and condition of our souls. Without self-reflection, a man may have every vice under the sun, without knowing he has any; provided he has it not in a high degree. For one, that perishes for want of knowing his duty, there are numbers, who are lost for ever, for want of seriously considering it, and laying it to heart. Our repentance must be full and complete, and extend to all those particulars wherein we have transgressed the laws of God; and till we discover all our follies and infirmities, we cannot amend, or so much as watch against them.

Our repentance by this means may in some measure keep pace with our errors and failings, when this examination is frequently repeated before the Lord's supper; and thus we may prevent the insupportable weight of the sins of a whole life falling upon us all at once, when we may neither have understanding nor leisure to recollect ourselves, much less to exercise any fit and proper acts of repentance toward God or man. And, in this examination, let us consider the sins that most easily beset our weakest part, by nature or custom least defensi-

ble; for the devil, like a skilful general, will attack us where we lie most exposed, hoping, by gaining that post, to make the town quickly surrender at his discretion. For which reason, in surveying the state of our minds, we should have an eye to those places that will least bear an assault: those appetites or passions that most frequently occasion our fall from God's grace. Again, we should consider the several aggravations of our follies: whether committed against the light of our minds; with the free consent of our wills, and in despite of the checks of our own conscience: whether they have been often repeated; whether transient acts or habitual disorders. And we ought to observe all those previous steps that have made us transgress, which have been fatal to the corrupting of our innocence, and the occasions of betraying our virtue.

This makes us thoroughly acquainted with ourselves and our own corruption; a knowledge, which is of the greatest consequence. By this we are driven to repentance, as the only cure for that guilt which oppresses our souls, and for which we lie at the mercy of God's vengeance: we are disposed to humility; and gain a lively sense of God's power and our frequent errors and miscarriages: we keep our accounts clear and even; and it is an admirable means to advance us toward christian perfection, by making us careful to avoid those faults for the future, which we have discovered in our former lives and conversations, not only through fear of punishment, but because we have offended so good and gracious a God. And

This duty should be accompanied with *confession* of sins to God, which is the judgment a man passes upon himself, either of approbation or of condemnation, whenever he deliberately weighs his own actions: or it is the sentence, which his reason suggests, that God, the judge of all the earth, will pass upon him. Yet it is not barely a repetition of the faults we are guilty of to almighty God; but it is such an acknowledgment of our faults, as is accompanied with shame for them, with hatred to them, and with resolutions to amend them. So that confession of sins doth plainly include, *First*, *contrition*, which is a holy grief, excited by a lively sense, not only of the

punishment due to guilt, but likewise of the infinite goodness of God, against which we have offended, accompanied with a detestation of our sin, and of ourselves for the sake of it. *Secondly*, that this sense, and this sorrow and this indignation, do put us upon applying ourselves to God, and there with shame and confusion laying open our miserable condition before him, and humbly and heartily begging his mercy and favour through the merits and intercession of our Lord Jesus. And this is that which is *confession* in the precise strict sense of the word. *Thirdly*, that at the same time we enter into stedfast and serious purposes to amend what hath been amiss in us, and to live more carefully, more obediently to the laws of God for the future. In such cases, where we have been preserved from guilt, we must give glory to God, and thankfully acknowledge that grace, which hath restrained us from sin. For, as no man is qualified for the mercy of God, that doth not devoutly confess his sins; so, if we do consider what is imported in confession, we shall be convinced that it is a thing, which in the very nature of it must needs, above all other things we can do, recommend us to God; for, by approaching to God with a hearty sense of our sins, and confessing them before him with truly contrite and penitent hearts, we make the best reparation we are capable of, for the affronts and injuries which by our sins we have committed against his divine majesty. And the more particular our confession is, the better it is, and the more acceptable it will be; because this particular confession is an argument and an expression of the sincerity of our repentance, and shows that we have searched and examined our hearts to the bottom, and that we harbour no concealed affection to any particular sin whatever, but that we are willing to destroy every enemy that speaks opposition to God and his laws. And *fourthly*, when our sins have been not only against God, but against our neighbour, we must make him *satisfaction:* we must restore whatever we have unjustly taken from him by fraud or force; we must vindicate his reputation, if we have blemished it by calumny and evil speaking; we must endeavour his recovery, by making him sensi-

ble of such sins and dangerous errors as we have drawn him into, that he may be put into a way of pardon before the throne of divine justice. So we must from our hearts forgive those that have injured us, if we expect that God should forgive us our faults; resting in a sure confidence that God's grace will be so effectually conveyed into our souls by this sacrament, as to seal God's pardon of all our sins for Christ's sake, provided we perform our part in forsaking them, and obeying his commandments for the future.

If we do not strive after this temper of mind, it is impossible we should be fit guests at the Lord's table; for this was the end of his death, which will deliver none from the punishment due to sin, who do not make use of that grace he has purchased to overcome the power and dominion thereof. How dare we pretend to commemorate our Saviour's sufferings, if we do not renounce and detest what was the cause thereof? or, how can we expect to be received by our Lord, if we do not declare war against his enemies, nor in the least prosecute those sinful lusts and affections, which tormented and nailed him to the cross? It becomes us to lay aside all resentment against those that have injured us, when we go to commemorate that infinite love, which took pity of us, when we were enemies to him. Such love should work into us a conformity, and make us desirous to be reconciled to those that have offended us; to be at peace with all the world, as we desire to be beloved and forgiven, and to be at peace with our Redeemer. Can we scruple to forgive others, who are undone ourselves, unless we are forgiven? Is it not in vain to ask pardon, when we find no inclination in our hearts to grant it to our neighbours? Or, can we forbear giving what we are able to the poor, when we go to commemorate so much bounty and liberality exercised toward us? It is our duty to do good to all men, because they are God's creatures; but necessitous christians must partake of our beneficence, because they are members of the same body, and are particular objects of the mercy and tenderness of our blessed Redeemer, who has made it one of the marks of the sincerity of our love to God; for whoso hath this

world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels from him, How dwelleth the love of God in him? Which sincerity of our love to God can never be so well attested, as when we are calling to mind the divine love, displaying itself to us in the bleeding wounds of our saviour Christ.

Prayer ought to have its due proportion in our preparatory exercises for this holy sacrament; because it helps us to that temper of mind which makes us welcome guests at God's table, and fills our thoughts with such spiritual objects, as are proper to entertain them at such opportunites. Our thoughts of business and affairs must as much as possible be laid aside, when we solemnly approach God's presence; and our thoughts should be applied entirely to such spiritual subjects, as the christian sacrifice naturally brings into our minds. Prayer, in its own nature, takes off our thoughts from the things of the world, and all sensible entertainment, and raises them to God, and those things that concern our eternal life. Prayer masters our evil habits by a lively sense of our duty, and fortifies us against temptation by the strength it communicates to our souls. Wherefore when we design to approach the holy table, we should prepare the way by devotion, and by attending the prayers of the church in public. And

Whoever presumes to come to the holy table of the Lord without this wedding garment, must expect to be cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. For, though God bears with such a sinner for a while, his damnation is sure, if not prevented by a timely repentance: if he will continue either wilfully to neglect this his bounden duty, or the means to receive it worthily, his punishment will be intolerable: For who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings? Therefore the church exhorts us 'to repent of our sins, or else not to come to that holy table; lest, after the taking of that holy sacrament, the devil enter into us as he entered into Judas, and fill us full of all iniquities, and bring us to destruction both of body and soul. And because it is requisite that no man should come to the holy communion, but with a full trust in God's mer-

cy, and with a quiet conscience; therefore, if there be any person who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel; then let him go to some discreet and learned *minister* of God's word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.

Thus, having laid down what is necessary to qualify a christian to receive the Lord's supper, I cannot better sum up our duty in these particulars than in that short exhortation of the church: 'Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to almighty God.' And this brings me to the next part of our duty, how we ought to behave *at* the time we approach the Lord's table to receive this holy sacrament.

III. *Behaviour at the Lord's Supper.*

Having duly reflected on our own unworthiness, and meditated upon the sufferings of Christ, his infinite love to mankind therein, his propitiation for sins, and our obligation to thankfulness, arising thence, we should receive the holy sacrament with great reverence and devotion; with particular attention of mind, accompanying him that administers throughout the whole office; which is admirably framed and composed to express all those pious dispositions and devout affections, which well-prepared minds ought to exercise upon such occasions; as our repentance in the confession and absolution; our charity in relieving our poor brethren; in praying for all conditions of men, and in forgiving those that have offended us; our humility in acknowledging our unworthiness; our resolutions of better obedience, in present

ing ourselves a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto God. And at the time of consecration, when you see the bread broken and the wine poured out, remember how Christ suffered for us; how his head was crowned with thorns, his back scourged at a pillar, his hands nailed to the cross, and the last drop of his blood spilt with a spear, for our sins: look with an eye of faith on him, who is the sacrifice once offered for the sins of the whole world; and beg of God the Father that he would accept of the satisfaction, and pardon of all our sins, and be reconciled to you for the merits of his beloved Son, who died for us. Consider what inexpressible thanks are due from us, for all that he has done to reconcile us to God. Think on those great agonies of his soul which drew from him that utmost disconsolate exclamation, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! and this will produce in your soul a most hearty and sincere thanksgiving, and teach you to admire the love of our Maker, who gave his only-begotten Son to redeem mankind. Should not such love as this deter you from sinning any more?

When you are about to receive, remember this sacrament is God's seal to the *new covenant*, in which we receive pardon of sins, grace to resist temptations, and a title to the inheritance of eternal bliss; yet upon no other condition than that we do also resolve to perform our part of the christian covenant promised in baptism; which resolution can then be no wise better expressed than by a hearty *Amen* to that excellent form, when the minister gives you the bread and wine, saying, *The body of our Lord, &c.* And so conclude with praises and thanksgivings in the hymns and devotions after the sacrament is received. While others are communicating, you may enlarge upon these subjects; but always take care that your own private devotions be laid aside when the minister calls on you to join with him in the public form of prayer: all which are particularly described in that devout treatise, called the *New Week's Preparation*; because the young communicant is there furnished with such

directions for his devout behaviour, and beneficial joining with the minister during the office of administration, as, I apprehend, are not to be met with elsewhere.

IV. *Behaviour after the Lord's Supper.*

But lest we should relapse into sin, by surprise, through our infirmities, or from more provoking facts; it concerns us to look about and revolve in our minds, how our conduct should be stated, and our life steered, *after* a worthy receiving of the holy sacrament. So, on our first retreat from this heavenly banquet, we should in our closets pay God the tribute of fervent prayer and praise, that we may walk in the same course all the days of our life. This will be some guard and security to us, that we do not overhastily drench and mire ourselves in worldly affairs. We ought to watch over our own hearts with great application, and some anxiety; lest we should depart from our well grounded resolutions and deliberate vows; because this would render our last state worse than the first. If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains a certain looking for of vengeance and fiery indignation. So that God is exasperated, our consciences raging, or laid waste, and those pardons and graces, which have been vouchsafed to us, will rise up in judgment against us, if we warp from our duty. No lawful vow can ever be dispensed with, because God is a party, and nothing short of divine revelation can be sufficient evidence that God will discharge any man from such a vow.

Thus the frequent use of the holy sacrament is the most likely means to increase our veneration and respect thereto. Because, though familiarity with the best of men may be apt to diminish that respect, which was paid to them, by reason of those frailties and imperfections, which are sometimes mixed with very great virtues, and which are only discovered by a great intimacy with them; yet the oftener we con-

verse with God in his holy ordinances, the more we shall admire his divine perfections, and the more we shall be disposed to conform ourselves to his will and example: because an object of infinite perfection in itself, and of infinite goodness to us, will always raise our admiration, and heighten our esteem and respect, the more we contemplate it; it being the discovery of some imperfection, where we thought there was none, that abates the value and reverence we had for any thing or person.

Besides, frequent communion preserves a lively sense of religion upon our minds, and invigorates our souls with fresh strength and power to perform our obligations. This strengthens that intimate union which ought to be inviolable between Jesus and the members of the mystical body of Christ. This is the proper nourishment of our souls, without which we can no more maintain our spiritual life, than we can our temporal without meat and drink. This raises in us strong ardours of love and consolation, so that it becomes the greatest torment we can endure to offend God, and our greatest delight to do his pleasure. This is the sovereign remedy against all temptation, by mortifying our passions and spiritualizing our affections: for how can we love any sinful satisfaction, which crucified the Lord of glory; and fix our hearts upon perishing objects, when he only deserves the whole man, as he requires? This ratifies and comfirms to us the pardon of our sins, and repairs those breaches which our follies have made within us. This fortifies our minds against all those afflictions and calamities, which are often the lot of the righteous in this miserable world; and administers to us such comfort and peace of conscience, as surpasses all understanding.

SUNDAY VI. Part II.

V. *Of the Honour due to* God's Name.

We now proceed to the *third* commandment, or the giving God the *honour due unto his* Name. The highest reverence is due to the name of God, in our thoughts, in our words, and in our actions. Therefore, when we mention the word of God, or any persons or things which have a relation to his worship or glory, with irreverence, it is, by just interpretation denying to honour God in his name. And what the honouring of his name is, will be best understood by a due consideration of those particulars, whereby it is dishonoured: for the avoiding of those things will be the best way to honour his holy name.

Of Blasphemy and Swearing. The *first* is Blasphemy, or speaking any evil thing of God; the highest degree of which is *cursing* him, or those persons or things that have a peculiar relation to God; or indeed cursing of any of God's creatures, which are all the works of his hands. And this may not be committed in thought, word, or deed, without the utmost outrage and profanation; for this is what the Psalmist reckons in the highest degree of sins, where he distinguishes offenders into three several ranks: The man that walketh in the counsel of the ungodly; the man that standeth in the way of sinners; and the man that sitteth in the seat of the scornful; that is, of those who not only neglect, but also *scoff* at religion, and make a mock at that, which of all things in the world is of the greatest importance. David, speaking of God's enemies, brands them with cursing inwardly, and cursing openly, or to the face, is the devil's suggestion against Job. Thus St. Paul says, God's name may be blasphemed by our wicked actions: By breaking the law dishonourest thou God: For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you. And the prophet Ezekiel says, your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they committed a tresspass against me.

Secondly, we dishonour God by *swearing falsely* or *rashly*; because an oath is an invocation of God, or an appeal to him to attest what we say to be true, whether the name of God be or be not expressly mentioned: for in all these cases a man does virtually call God to witness; and, in so doing, he does by consequence invoke him as a judge and avenger, if what he swears be not true. There is indeed a great use and even necessity of oaths, in many cases: which is so great, that human society can very hardly, if at all, subsist long without them. Government would many times be very insecure; and for the faithful discharge of offices of great trust, in which the welfare of the public is nearly concerned, it is not possible to find any security equal to that of an oath; because the obligation of that reaches to the most secret and hidden practices of men, and takes hold of them, in many cases, where the penalty of human law can have any awe or force upon them: and especially it is the best means of ending matters in debate. So mankind can never be fully satisfied, where their estates or lives are concerned, without the evidence is assured by an oath; and it is well known, that God himself requires in a *lawful* oath these three conditions, *truth*, *judgment*, and *righteousness*. Hence it is that the church declares, 'As we confess, that vain and rash swearing is forbidden christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his apostle; so we judge, that christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophets teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth. In which sense oaths are generally divided into *assertory* and *promissory*. An assertory oath is when a man affirms or denies upon oath a matter of fact, past or present; when he swears that a thing was, or is so, or not so. And a promissory oath is a promise confirmed by an oath, that always respects something future: which promise is called a vow, if it be made directly and immediately to God; but only an oath when made to man. I say then, that

In every lawful oath there must be truth; we must take great care, when we are upon our oaths, that we say nothing but what we know or believe to be true; for there cannot be a greater provocation offered to almighty God, who is the God of truth, than to bring him in for witness and voucher to a falsehood; besides, to do this destroys the very end of taking oaths, which is to bring truth to light. Again, in every lawful oath there must be judgment: we must not swear rashly and unadvisedly, but in cool and sober thoughts, having duly considered how sacred a thing an oath is: moreover, we must be fully satisfied that the occasion is every way fit and deserving of so sacred a seal.—And finally, we must swear in righteousness: we must set aside all respect of relation or friendship, and all other grounds whatever of favour and affection to any part concerned; as also the considerations of interest or disadvantage that may happen to ourselves; regarding only the justice of the cause; whether it be that we give our oaths for the defence of the innocent, or punishment of the guilty; and we must take care that we swear not in a wrong case, though it were our own, and we should reap ever so great a benefit in carrying our point. Hence

From these three necessary conditions of swearing in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, we may observe that an oath is an act of religious worship, a part of that glory which we are to give to God; being an open acknowledgement of his justice and truth; and that he is every where present, and knows and sees all things, and will avenge himself upon the ungodly, particularly upon those who break this precept of his law. Wherefore it is not possible for men to lay a more sacred and solemn obligation upon their consciences, than by the religion of an oath, which is binding our souls with a bond; because he that sweareth lays the strongest obligation upon himself, and puts his soul in pawn for the truth of what he swears to. So that this obligation of an oath can never be violated, but at the utmost peril of God's judgment and vengeance.

VI. *Of Perjury.*

This will lead us to a true sense of that dishonour done to God by the sin of PERJURY, which is a solemn calling of God to witness the truth of that which we either know to be false, or do not know to be true. Such an oath implies a curse upon ourselves; and is a crime of so high a nature, that no man can possibly be guilty of it, who has any sense at all of religion remaining upon his mind: for he who knowingly and deliberately calls God to witness a falsehood, in order to deceive or wrong his neighbour, does openly disclaim the mercies of God, and challenges the Almighty to show him no favour. Therefore

Observe, when a man asserts upon oath what he knows to be otherwise, or promises what he does not intend to perform, his oath becomes perjury. In like manner, when a man promises upon oath to do that which is unlawful for for him to do, because this oath is contrary to a former obligation, it is perjury. Again, when a man is uncertain in what he swears to be true, his oath is perjury, in the act, though not of the same degree of guilt with the former; because it is not so fully and directly against his conscience and knowledge. Men ought not to swear at a venture, but to be certain of the truth of what they assert upon oath: consequently, no man ought positively to swear to the truth of any thing, but what he himself hath learnt, or seen or heard; which is the highest assurance men are capable of in this life. So also he is guilty of perjury in the same degree, who promises upon oath what he is not morally and reasonably certain he shall be able to do. Men are likewise guilty of perjury, who answer equivocally and doubtfully, or with reservation of something in their minds, thinking thereby to salve the truth of what they say; for oaths should be attended with calmness and simplicity: the use of oaths being to assure the persons to whom they are made, they must be taken in the sense of those that impose

them. So there can be no greater affront to God, than to use his name to deceive our neighbour.—Nor can any thing more directly overthrow the great end and use of oaths, which are for conformation, and to put an end to strife among men; because equivocation and reservation leave the thing in debate in the same uncertainty it was before. Let not men, therefore, think by this device to save themselves harmless from the guilt of so great a sin; for they do really increase it, by adding to their iniquity the imputed folly of mocking God, and deceiving their own souls. Men are also guilty of perjury after the act, who having a real intention, when they swear, to perform what they promised, yet afterward neglect to perform their oath; not for want of power (for so long as that continues the obligation ceases) but want of will and due regard to the oath they have sworn.

Seeing therefore that deliberate perjury is acting directly against a man's knowledge, which is one of the greatest aggravations of any crime; I must add, that it is equally a sin against both tables, the highest affront to God, and of the most injurious consequence to our neighbour; by which the name of God is horribly abused, his judgment contemned, and his vengeance insolently held at defiance: by which also not only this or that particular person suffers wrong, but human society is injured thereby; the foundations of public peace and justice, and the private security of every man's life and fortune, are at once overthrown: and the best and last way that the wisdom of men could devise for the decision of doubtful matters, is hereby defeated. Where it should be observed, that, as there is no threatening added to any other commandment but to this and the second, it intimates to us, that, next to idolatry and the worship of a false God, perjury is one of the greatest affronts that can be offered to our Creator; and may, without aggravation, be accounted one of those sins, that cry so loud to heaven, and quicken the pace of God's judgment upon the obstinate sinner, who will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. And also,

VII. *Of rash Swearing and Cursing.*

From this we learn the great sin of that indecent as well as wicked custom of *rash* SWEARING in common conversation. Of which sin the first aggravation is, that they who are guilty of it are in perpetual danger of the crime of perjury: for he who uses himself to swear frequently and habitually, will never attend carefully, that what he swears be true. Nay, it is too just an observation, that they who are accustomed to this vice at all, are then apt to be the most guilty of it, when they are most provoked, and most suspicious that what they affirm is not credible. To call upon God perpetually as a witness to mean and trivial matters is a manifest want of reverence, and of a just sense of God and religion.

CURSING also is another part of the profanation of the name of God: for when men in common conversation use curses and imprecations against their brethren or themselves, as the Jews did, when they answered Pilate, and said let his [Christ's] blood be upon us and on our children, it is either with an intention and desire that mischief may befall them, which is both malicious toward men, and also irreligiously thinking light of the curse of God; or else it is without any such desire or intention, and then it is profanely supposing God to have no regard to their behaviour: they should recollect that the vengeance of God will find them out, not only for the evil deeds they commit, but for the profane folly (so frequent among us) of wishing that damnation to themselves, which they otherwise but too well deserve. They who thus add to the guilt of their sins the binding power of a curse, are doubly unpardonable; they consent to their punishment, as they before consented to their crime: and their damnation therefore is every way just. And these faults are the more inexcusable, because they cannot here be pretended, as in most other vices, any natural temptation. There is no sensual pleasure in them, because they are not found in the temper of the body: no man, I think, is born with a swearing or cursing constitution, though it may be a man shall be naturally prone

to anger or lust. Besides, there is as little profit as pleasure in them; for the common and trivial use of oaths and curses makes them perfectly insignificant to their end, and is so far from giving credit to a man's word that it rather weakens its credit: for common swearing and cursing always argue in a man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgment that he thinks his bare word is not worthy to be taken. Neither can they be said to adorn and fill a man's discourse; for it highly offends and grates upon all sober and considerate persons, who cannot be presumed with any manner of ease and patience to hear God so affronted upon every slight account. Moreover,

It is a crime for which men can plead no excuse. They who pretend to do it ignorantly, and not observing and knowing what they do, are inexcusable; because, certainly, it is no extenuation of a fault, that a man has got the habit of it so perfect, that he commits it when he does not think thereof. Neither is that any just excuse, wherewith many deceive themselves, when they swear by any other thing, and not by their Maker: for this very precaution shows, that they could as easily, if they were careful, avoid the sin wholly, as attend to a particular circumstance in the manner of committing it. Which circumstance, nevertheless, does not at all hinder it from amounting in reality to the very same thing. For as, in common speech, that usual prayer, Heaven bless or reward a man, is evidently of the very same import, as if therein had been more expressly mentioned God, who dwelleth in heaven; so swearing by any creature does in truth amount to the same thing as swearing by the name of God, whose creature it is, and who alone indeed can finally be supposed to be appealed to for the truth of the thing affirmed, and for the sincerity of the intention; a consideration which should make men oppose the beginning of this vice, lest it grow into a habit very hard to be overcome. It must be a great charity that can find out a way to reconcile a common custom or swearing with a serious belief of the christian religion.

VIII. *Of making Vows.*

The name of God is also profaned by careless and inconsiderate Vows: when the matter of them is either unjust, impossible, or unreasonable; or the thing avowed be unprofitable, and of no tendency to promote true religion; or the manner of making the vow be rash and irreligious. Therefore the best and only good rule in this matter is, that among christians there is no use, no benefit, no encouragement given to any such thing as making any vows at all: for why should men needlessly bring snares upon their own souls, or intangle themselves in difficulties, where there is no command? The vows mentioned in the Old Testament are all either parts of the Jewish ceremonial law, which is now wholly abolished; or else they signify only general resolutions of serving and obeying God, which can never too often or too seriously be renewed; as when Jacob vowed, that the Lord should be his God; that is, that he would always continue stedfast in the true religion. In the New Testament there is (I think) no one instance of any vow made by a christian; the vow of Aquila, and that of the four persons with whom St. Paul purified himself, being both of them vows that had been made before their conversion to christianity. Baptism indeed and the Lord's supper are solemn vows of obedience to God; but the matter of them is such as was our indispensable duty before: and such solemn renewing our holy resolutions of doing what is of absolute necessity to be done, is undoubtedly of great and perpetual use. But in other cases, vows are at best nothing but needless snares upon men; and generally they are of superstitious and unwarrantable practice. For what is fit to be done may be done without laying upon ourselves unnecessary obligations; and such obligations can be of no benefit, but needlessly to involve men in snares and scruples. So that the best direction to be given to christians concerning this matter is never to intangle themselves in any other obligations at all; but only take care to keep those sacred vows and resolutions, which they solemnly enter into at baptism and the supper of the Lord.

SUNDAY VII.

I. *Of the* WORSHIP *due to God's name; setting forth the several parts of* PRAYER. II. *Of* public prayer, *in the church, in the family; and of our* behaviour after *public prayer.* III. *Of* private prayer. IV. *Of the necessary* condition *of* prayer. V. *Of its only* object; *as also of its* power *and* efficacy; *with answers to objections against this duty.* VI. *Of* repentance, *and the danger of delaying it; and* VII. *Of* fasting, *as a part of repentance.*

I. *Of the Worship due to God's Name.*

THE next duty we owe to God is WORSHIP: a duty peculiar to God alone; and is to be performed both by our *souls* and *bodies.* At present therefore I shall only direct you to the duty of worshipping God in *prayer,* which is the part performed by the soul. The soul addresses itself to God, and the mind raises itself toward heaven, by PRAYER; which receives different names according to those various subjects the mind is employed about in such addresses. When we bewail our particular sins with sorrow, and full purposes of amendment, it is called *confession;* when we implore God's mercy, and desire any favour from him, *petition;* when for the averting any evil, *deprecation* or *supplication:* when we beg any thing for others, *intercession:* when we express a grateful sense of benefits received, *thanksgiving;* when we acknowledge and adore the divine perfections, it is styled *praise.* So that in all these acts we have the great honour to be admitted into God's presence, and to treat with him about those things which chiefly concern our own happiness, or that of our neighbour. But,

Of Prayer, and its Parts. In the *first* place, let us compose our spirits, and gather in our thoughts from the mazes of the world; and then begin our prayers with solemnly addressing ourselves to that Lord God almigh-

ty with whom we have to do; declaring, both by our inward composure, and outward behaviour, our full belief of his presence, and a holy awe and reverence to his majesty, and an entire reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ alone, for acceptance of our imperfect prayers before God the Father.

Having thus given glory to God, we must humbly confess to him all our sins committed in thought, word, or deed; and earnestly request pardon for our sins of omission and ignorance. Thus *confession* is either a general or more particular acknowledging of our sins before God: the former of which is a necessary part of all our public prayers, the latter is most proper in our private prayers only. Not thereby that we can inform God of what he does not know; but in a true sense of our own simplicity, corruption and wretchedness, to humble ourselves before the throne of his grace, and own ourselves, liable to what punishment his justice shall condemn us. But above all, we must be most heartily thankful to God the Father, for his patience and long suffering toward us, and for his readiness to be reconciled to us through Jesus Christ his only Son, concluding always with humble professions of sorrow and shame for sin, and firm resolutions of amendment; resolving, through the assistance of divine grace, that we will be better, and do better, for the time to come.

The *next* part of prayer is that commonly called *petition;* or the entreating of God to grant unto us all those things that are needful both for our souls and bodies: for our souls, as our sins are, what we ought to be most afraid of, let our confessions be always attended with petitions for pardon and forgiveness, through the merits of Christ Jesus; that he will grant us his favour, blessing, and gracious repentance; that he will please to grant us a comfortable sense of his pardon of us; and that we may abound in righteousness, hope, quietness and assurance, for ever, through the power of the Holy Ghost; that God will please to strengthen us with his grace against every evil thought, word, or deed, and all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; directing our consciences, shewing us the way of our du-

ty, and making us wise and humble Christians; and that he will plant in us all holy principles and dispositions, and increase every grace in our hearts, as faith, fear, love, charity, self-denial, humility, meekness, patience, contentment, and hope in God and Christ, but especially those graces which we are most in want of; and a hope of eternal life, prepared for such as love God and keep his commandments; and that he will make us prudent and discreet, honest and sincere, active and diligent, resolute and courageous, pleasant and cheerful, and universally conscientious in every event of providence, every condition of life, and in every relation wherein we stand toward God or our neighbour; that he will make us wiser and better every day than other; and that he will please to prepare us for a happy death, that we may at length enjoy the mansions of eternal happiness, And,

The kingdom of God and his righteousness being thus petitioned or sought for, we may have the boldness to beg that all other things, the necessaries, the comforts and supports of this world, may be added unto us: that we may enjoy the good things of this life, as well as be preserved from the calamities to which we are constantly subject. And let all our petitions conclude with this humbleness of heart: Lord, thou hast given us many and exceeding great and precious promises, which are all certain in Christ; therefore, be it now unto thy servant according to thy word.

The *third* part of prayer is *deprecation;* which is a praying to God, that he will turn away from us some evil either of sin or punishment.

We are to pray against the evil of sin, especially when we are in most danger of falling into it; and against the evil both of spiritual and temporal punishment; with this caution, to be earnest in our prayers, that God would not be angry with us, nor withdraw his grace, nor punish us with eternal damnation. But in temporal afflictions we must always pray with resignation to his divine will, according to the example of our blessed Saviour: who, when under the greatest afflictions, said, Not *my* will, but *thine* be done!

A *fourth* part of prayer is *intercession*, or praying for others; therefore the apostle appoints us to make supplications for all saints, that all men may be saved by the knowledge of the truth; that he will convince and convert atheists, deists, infidels, and all others, who are out of the way of truth, scoff at his word and ordinances, and disgrace christianity by their vice and immorality; that he will not forsake nor forget our nation in time of public danger and distress; that he will continue among us the gospel in its purity, and the means of grace according to his own holy ordinance; that he will continue our outward peace and tranquility, liberty, and plenty; that he will prosper our trade, and bless the fruits of the earth for our use; that he will protect and preserve all those to whom we bear any relation, as our chief magistrate, our parents, husbands, wives, children, friends, benefactors, &c.—that he will teach our senators wisdom; and give his spirit of wisdom, understanding, and justice, to all that are employed in public affairs, or are appointed to execute justice, or to instruct others in the knowledge and love of God, and of his son Jesus Christ: that he will bless all sorts and conditions of men, whether young or old, setting out into the world, or in long possession thereof; whether rich or poor; those that are prosperous in this world, or such as are under afflictions; those that hate, as well as those that love us.

In the *last* place, we must also gratefully *acknowledge* his goodness toward us; which acknowledgment, though it can add nothing to his glory, he is pleased to accept of, and reckons himself glorified by it, if it comes from a heart that is humbly sensible of its own unworthiness to receive any favour from him; and values the gifts, and loves the giver of them all. We must thank him for all his mercies both spiritual and temporal to us and all mankind in general, for all his goodness and loving kindness to us and to all men; and in particular for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings we have received at his hands; and above all, for his inestimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and the hopes of glory in the world to come.

II. *Of Public Prayer.*

Having thus given you the several parts of prayer, the next thing to be considered is, WHERE we ought to pray: and here it will be found our duty to pray both in *public* and *private*. Those prayers are most acceptable to God, and most necessary for us, which are offered in *public assemblies;* because they have these advantages above private devotions, that God is most honoured and glorified by such addresses; and a sense of his majesty is maintained in the world, somewhat suitable to his most excellent greatness and goodness, when by outward signs and tokens we publish and declare the inward regard and esteem we have for his divine attributes: for private prayer is only piety confined within our breasts; but public prayer is piety exemplified and displayed in our outward actions; it is the beauty of holiness made visible; our light shines out before men, and in the eye of the world; it enlarges the interest of godliness, and keeps up a face and sense of religion among mankind. Our Saviour promises his special presence to such assemblies, and hath appointed a particular order of men to offer up our prayers in such places of worship. Besides, we may expect greater successes, when our petitions are made with the joint and unanimous consent of our fellow christians, and when our devotions receive warmth and heat from the exemplary zeal of pious ministers. Whoever thinks justly must be sensible, that private religion never did in fact subsist, but where some public profession of it was regularly kept up: he must be sensible, that if public worship was once discontinued, a universal forgetfulness of that God would ensue, whom to remember is the strongest sense and preservative against vice; and that the bulk of mankind would soon degenerate into mere savages and barbarians, if there were not stated days to call them off from the common business of this life, to attend to what is the most important business of all their salvation in the next. These considerations

should make all good christians frequently attend the public worship in the house of God. Therefore it is to be wished, that they who have opportunities and are not lawfully hindered, should endeavour so to regulate their time, as to be able constantly to attend on prayer at church; for, as those who have leisure cannot better employ it, so they must have but little concern for the honour and glory of God who neglect such opportunities of declaring and publishing his praise before men. In a word, public worship is the great instrument of securing a sense of God's providence and of a world to come; and a sense of God's providence and a world to come is the great basis of all social and private duties. One thing more I beg leave to mention Though you should be a regular attendant on the service of the church; take care, that your deportment out of church be correspondent to your behaviour in it; otherwise, you will do religion more disservice, than if you were its open and avowed enemy.

Of Family Prayer. The next christian duty is *family prayer.* Every master of a family is answerable to God for the welfare of those souls that are under his care. Nor can I well understand how a sense of religion can be maintained in a family without the exercise of daily devotion in it. Families are but little societies, as societies are larger families: and therefore religion, which is confessedly the best bond and cement of union in states and larger communities, is likewise so in little domestic governments. It is therefore incumbent upon those, who preside over a family, to impress a sense of religion upon those who are beneath them. By this method we are best able to confirm and establish children and servants in the practice of their christian obligations. If ever then you would have your children to be dutiful, and your servants faithful; if ever you desire your small community here should join hereafter with the great congregation of men and angels in heaven; be sure to cultivate the spot of ground committed to

your care; teach them to look up to God in every step of their conduct; impress upon them, and keep alive in them, by repeated prayers, a manly, serious, and devout frame of mind. From a neglect of doing this, it comes to pass, that our youth, as soon as they launch out into the world, fall an easy defenceless prey to those professors of iniquity, who go about seeking whom they may devour; that they become proselytes, from the best religion the world was ever blessed with to no religion at all; and that those, who should be the flower of the nation, are too often the very dregs of it. This devotion must be also remembered at our meals: for we ought to beg the blessing of God upon those good creatures provided for our use; since it is by the word of God and prayer that they are sanctified to us. Natural religion itself teaches us thankfully to acknowledge the benefits we receive; and this particular instance of it hath sufficient ground from the example of Christ and his holy apostles, all the evangelists declaring that our Saviour blessed and gave thanks before meat; the same St. Luke relates of St. Paul; and even St. Paul himself speaks of it, as the known practice of the church among christians in his time.

III. *Of Private Prayer.*

But this performance of public prayer can by no means excuse a man from the other duty of *private prayer*, which is *that* praying to our Father in secret, commanded by our Saviour; and to which in particular he has promised a reward. And when a man does thus approach to God in private he ought to be more particular, according to his pressing necessities, than it may be convenient for him to express himself in public. This duty God hath established as a means, whereby we are to obtain whatever we want in relation to our souls and bodies; we are to ask before it shall be given, we must seek before we shall find, we must knock before it will be opened unto us.—The mind of man naturally affects independence. To

check this temper, God has obliged us to ask for the assistance of his holy spirit; and our being obliged to ask continually, reminds us of (what we are very apt to forget) the dependence we have on him for our spiritual as well as natural abilities. Were, indeed, what we receive a matter of strict debt, then we might say, Who is the Lord that we should pray unto him? But, as our enjoyments are the effects of his undeserved mercy, it becomes us to ask if we would receive. What we could receive without petitioning for it, we should look upon as entirely our own acquisition, exclusively of our Maker. This seems to be the most obvious reason, why God has annexed the promises of his grace to the performance of this condition: that prayer might be a perpetual memorial of our reliance on him, calling us to a state of such humility, that, whenever we do well, we should in the words of the Psalmist acknowledge, Not unto us, Not unto us, O Lord: but unto thy name be ascribed the glory. And whenever we do ill, we should in the words of Daniel confess, To thee, O Lord, belongeth righteousness; but unto us confusion of face. And he hath promised the assistance of his holy spirit to help us in the performance of our prayers; and hath appointed his Son to intercede by virtue of his merits for their admission. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that we should live in the *constant* exercise of prayer; and in so doing we cannot fail of attaining the end we aim at, our souls salvation. None can be virtuous that live without praying. Let people boast ever so much of the great effect of a good resolution, they must at last confess, that there is no getting such a victory over their lusts and corruptions, no living such a christian life as the gospel requires of us, without the practice of earnest and ardent prayer to God, a constant attendance to reading and meditation, and other devout exercises. Though we have formed our purposes, as we think, ever so strongly, and doubt not but that we shall be able to resist every temptation; yet if we do not daily apply ourselves to the throne of grace for strength and influence, and support, there

can be little hopes that we should make any great progress or advancement in christianity; but, on the contrary, it is much to be feared that such a neglect will bring us insensibly into a state of carelessness and indifferency to these matters, if not entirely to a worldly, sensual, or vicious life.

Where let it be remarked, our whole duty is made up but of *three* things; that a man live *soberly*, with respect to himself; *righteously*, with respect to his neighbour; and *piously*, with respect to God. Supposing now, that a man takes care of doing his duty to himself and his neighbour; yet if he makes no conscience of piety toward God, in what sense can he be said to have done his duty, or to live virtuously? truly in no sense; because, as to one third part of his duty, he is a notorious offender, For, though he be not unjust, though he be not debauched: yet, wanting piety toward God, he is impious; and this will as certainly condemn him, as either of the other sins.—Therefore one of these two things must be made appear, that is to say, that there may be such virtue as will recommend us to God without piety, or that there may be piety without ever praying to or worshipping God: neither of which I believe was ever imagined: or, it will follow, that where there is no praying, there is no virtue, and consequently no salvation for such as neglect that duty. Devotion is as necessary a means to preserve the union between the soul and God, in which our spiritual life consists, as meat and drink is to preserve the union between our souls and bodies, by which our natural life is supported. So we may every whit as reasonably expect to keep our bodies alive without the constant and daily use of eating and drinking, as we can expect to keep our souls alive to God, without the constant and daily exercise of prayer. But as to the proper time in which this duty ought to be more particularly performed, that must be regulated according to the leisure every one can find from the duty of his necessary business or calling; yet this duty must never be neglected at morning and evening, and we may all lift up our hearts to God in

some pious ejaculation in every work throughout the whole day.

The benefits of prayer. Such as make a conscience of saying their prayers frequently and heartily, and continue so to do, though they be not good at the present, yet it is impossible for them long to continue in bad habits; they will at last certainly get the victory over all their lusts, and attain to the favour of God, and their own salvation. And the benefits and advantages that do accrue to us from it are innumerable. It is the most proper means to ennoble and refine, and spiritualize our natures in the new birth. If our daily converse with material objects was not balanced by prayer, it would make us wholly sensual, and the flesh would destroy the works of the spirit. The constant exercise of prayer is the best method to get the mastery of our evil inclinations, and to overcome our vicious customs: by this we preserve a lively sense of our duty upon our minds, and are fortified against many temptations that continually assault our souls and bodies; by this our souls are raised above this world, and spiritual objects are made familiar to us; by this our affections are sanctified, and we are supported under the calamities and crosses of this life: and by this we are led gradually to the perfection of christian piety, and preserved in a strict union between God and our souls, wherein consists our spiritual life. Every vice is checked and every virtue kept alive by a fixed awakened sense of the Deity, by a due regard for, and fear of him. In fine, without this we in vain pretend to discharge those duties that are incumbent upon us as christians, or to prosper in our temporal affairs; which must have God's blessing to crown them with advantage to us. Prayer secures the blessing of God, both upon our persons and upon our labours; upon our families, upon our store, upon our employments, and upon all that we do, have, or desire: it turns all the actions of our natural or civil life, however indifferent they be, into actions of religious worship. By that every thing that we have, or comes to us, is made a blessing from God, which without it,

perhaps, might have been an affliction and cross. It is true, God will grant us what is fit; but then it is as true, that it is not fit he should prostitute his favours upon those who will not pray for them with a humble sense of their dependence, and receive them with a grateful sense of his goodness. Prayer is that by which every thing and every action is sanctified to believers.

This duty requires no labour; the feeblest and most dispirited body that can but lift up a heart to heaven and direct its wishes thither, doth it as effectually as the most vigorous. This duty doth not go against the grain of any natural inclination; nor put the body to any pain or inconveniency. This duty puts us to no charge or expence in the world, save that of our thoughts, which are hereby fixed on things in heaven. This duty in no wise consumes our time, for we may attend this work when we are doing the business of our calling. So that there is no objection against it; it is one of the most easy, natural, and inoffensive duties that God enjoins his creatures.

Besides, it is the most pleasant and delightful exercise of all the pleasures of the soul. We may talk of pleasures and enjoyments; but no man ever truly found them, till he became acquainted with God; till he became sensible of his love, partook of his spiritual favours, and lived in an entire friendship and communion with him; which is chiefly, if not only, both expressed and maintained by prayer and other exercises of a devout and spiritual life. There can be therefore no better reason assigned for the great neglect of this duty, than either a lustful heart, which confines its desires and hopes within the narrow bounds of carnal pleasures, and the dross of a perishable world; or a want of practising it, or using thereof; for there are many things that seem uneasy at the first trial, which upon custom become delightful.

SUNDAY VII. Part II.

IV. *The Conditions of Prayer.*

Let our prayers be ever so frequent and fervent, they must be rightly qualified: and these *requisites* or *conditions* of prayer are either such as concern the matter of our prayers, or the things we are to pray for; or such as concern the manner of our prayers, or the qualifications with which they are to be attended. And,

First, The things which we ask, must be such as are *lawful* and agreeable to the will of God. Now, whatever is not just is not agreeable to the will of God, and consequently ought not to be prayed for; as for example, to pray for revenge upon our enemies, to desire God to prosper us in our wicked courses, and the like is not lawful. Again, things may be very just in themselves, but yet it will be very unjust in us to ask them; namely, when we ask good things but to evil purposes, then we ask and receive not, because we ask amiss: and why so? we ask, that we may consume them upon our lusts. Again, the matter of our prayers may be lawful in itself, and we may ask with honest and innocent designs, yet the things we ask may not be according to God's will; because God perhaps sees they are not convenient for us, or he sees that some other things will better suit our circumstances of body or soul: this is the case of all those worldly blessings, commonly so called.

Secondly, We must ask in *faith*. This is a condition ordered by our Saviour to his apostles; All things (saith he) whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive: which implies no more than the praying with a hearty belief both that God is able to grant the requests we put to him, and that, for the sake of Jesus Christ, he will do it, supposing that it will be for his glory and our good; and also supposing that we perform all the conditions which are required on our part toward the obtaining thereof. So

that to pray in faith is to pray to God with a full purpose of heart (let what will come) to believe and to live like a christian; not to use any indirect means, or to depart from the sincerity of our christian profession, for the gaining even of the whole world. These conditions must be accompanied with constancy and perseverance.

Thirdly, Our prayers should always be offered up with *humility*, acknowledging our own unworthiness. For the proud, and those that are full of themselves, are the most unfit for prayer, and the most offensive to God. When they make addresses to him in any manner, he resists them; he beholdeth them afar off, as the scripture expresses it, with an eye of scorn: but he giveth grace to the humble; nor will he despise the broken and contrite heart. We may put up our requests for any lawful thing, but then it must constantly be with this condition, if God sees it fit for us, and it be agreeable to the will of his divine majesty: though we may peremptorily ask all spiritual blessings in particular, and be assured, if the other requisites of our prayers do concur we shall obtain them. And, at all times, our great endeavour should be to dispossess all wandering thoughts at the time of devotion; for this is drawing near to God with our lips, when our hearts are far from him; and they that thus slight and despise the dreadful majesty of God they come before, will more likely bring a curse than a blessing upon themselves. But if this cannot be perfectly done, let not a few interruptions damp a truly devout prayer; for, considering the frame and constitution of our natures, and the close connection between soul and body, when we are at our prayers, our thoughts may be diverted, and our intentions interrupted by the impressions of study or business of this world. This I thought necessary to observe, because some weak men of a sanguine complexion are apt to be elated upon the account of those short-lived raptures and transient gleams of joy, which they feel within themselves; and others of a phlegmatic constitution, to despond, because they cannot work themselves up to such a degree of fervour. Whereas nothing is more precarious and uncertain than that affection, which depends upon the ferment of the blood: it natu-

tally ceases, as soon as the spirits flag, and are exhausted. Men of this make, sometimes draw near to God with great fervency; and at other times are quite estranged from him. A steady, regular, consistent piety is more acceptable to that Being, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of change, than all the passionate sallies, and short intermitting fits, of an unequal devotion. Therefore, all we can do is to watch and strive against these distractions, to bewail this weakness, and to compose our thoughts to all that seriousness our temper and circumstances will permit; to recall our minds as soon as we perceive they run out upon other objects, and immediately to throw away all such thoughts as are foreign to our devotions, and to beg God's pardon and assistance; remembering always, that what makes these distractions criminal, is when we willingly entertain them and indulge ourselves in thinking upon other objects without restraint, when we keep our unreasonable passions under no government, and take no care to compose ourselves into a serious temper, by considering in whose awful presence we appear, when at our devotions.

Fourthly, Our hearts must be possessed with a *deep sense* of God's *majesty*, which is infinite and incomprehensible. Let it be deeply impressed upon our minds, that we pray to no less a person than the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, that was from everlasting, and is to everlasting, world without end. And then we ought more particularly, in order to the praying as we should do, to get our hearts possessed with a sense of his *goodness*. This is that, which, above all other things, will put life and vigour into our prayers, will both stir us up to this duty, and support us in the performance thereof. He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Fifthly, We must endeavour to get our minds seriously affected with a sense of *our manifold wants*; for otherwise it is impossible we should heartily pray for redress and supply: therefore if we desire to bring ourselves to a praying temper, we must often take an account of the state of our souls, and examine what necessities we have to be supplied, what sins to be pardoned,

what evil affections to be mortified, what virtues and graces of the holy spirit to be attained for our strength and support.

Sixthly, All these conditions must be accompanied with great *fervour* and *constancy*; that is, we must, in the most hearty, serious, and affectionate manner, put up our requests to God for his aid: and likewise, in so doing, we must persevere to the end.

Seventhly, It is also required, for the preparing and disposing us for the putting up of our prayers as we should do, that we *purify* our hearts from all actual affection to sin; that we come not to God with any of our wickednesses about us, but that we do put them away from us, at least in purpose and desire. The necessity of this requisite is so great, that there is no praying where it is wanting. For, if I incline unto wickedness with my heart, the Lord will not hear me. We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a doer of his will, he will hear him. Therefore, till we can seriously resolve to quit our evil courses, to forsake every known, wilful, open sin that we are conscious to ourselves we live in, let us not think ourselves prepared and qualified to put up our prayers to God, who will not be mocked.

Lastly, To all those requisites we must also add that worship of the body, which is particularly exhorted by the royal Psalmist, where he says, O come, let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our maker: this necessarily implies, that the just and devout meaning of our souls should be expressed by suitable, humble, and reverent gestures of the body, in our approaches or prayers to God. And therefore St. Paul, knowing that this also is a tribute due from the body of a man to the Creator, commands us to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's.

V. *The Efficacy of Prayer.*

By this account we have given of prayer, it appears, not only that it is a duty we owe to God, but that it is a duty we owe to him *alone*, and that no being in the world beside himself hath a right to be prayed unto. Because,

if prayer be one of the principal instances of that honour, and an expression of that dependence, that we owe to the creator and governor of the world; then certainly to be prayed unto is, and forever will be, one of the rights and prerogatives of his sovereign majesty, never to be given to any thing created. Consequently, to invoke or pray to any creature in a religious way, though it be the highest creature in heaven, whether angel or saint, not excepting the blessed Virgin herself, must needs be an affront done to God, as giving that honour to one of his creatures, that is only proper to the creator. For all idolatry naturally leads to other immoralities; and when men like not to retain God in their knowledge, they are very apt to be given over to a reprobate mind. Besides, will-worship, of what kind soever, evidently derogates from the honour of God; distracting men's devotions; dividing that affection and reliance of mind, which ought to be placed upon God alone; and always leading to superstitious equivalents instead of true virtue, which alone can render men acceptable in the eyes of the all-seeing Judge. Should any one pretend to say that sinful men cannot of themselves acceptably approach the supreme throne of God; we have, by divine appointment, a sufficient mediator and advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: who sitteth continually on the right hand of God, as our great high priest and intercessor, to mediate for us, and to offer up our prayers unto the Father. Through him we have access unto the Father. And our Lord's own direction is; Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he shall give it you. Prayer therefore is to be directed to God alone, through Christ alone. And as praying to false gods, derogates from the honour of the one true God; so praying by or through the intercession of false and fictitious mediators, derogates in like manner from the honour of Christ, the only true mediator. For as there is but one God; so there is also but one mediator between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus.

As an encouragement for us to pray, David says, The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desires of those that fear him; he also

will hear their prayers, and will save them: the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers. And our Saviour says to his apostles, Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do: and again he repeats it, If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. Yet, if it should be thought that this promise was made to the apostles only, and doth not concern us, let us hear what St. John writes to us: Brethren, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him. Ask, says our Saviour, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Nothing can be more gracious, nothing more comfortable than this promise; which is still enforced most pathetically, immediately following: What man is there among you, whom if his son ask bread will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more will your heavenly Father give good things unto them that ask him? Besides, the holy scriptures not only contain many promises and assurances that God will hear our prayers, but afford us many instances of his making good those promises at all times, and to all persons, and that in a most wonderful manner. For, by prayer, Moses quenched the devouring fire: by prayer, Elias brought down fire from heaven: by prayer, Elisha restored the dead to life: by prayer, Hezekiah slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians in one night: by prayer, David stopped the avenging angel, when his hand was lifted up to destroy Jerusalem: and by prayer, Jonah was delivered out of the fish's belly. Yet,

Notwithstanding this usefulness, advantage, and necessity of prayer; nay though God has declared absolutely, that we shall not have the good things that we stand in need of, except we pray for them; there have been, and doubtless are still, some emissaries of the devil, who pretend to argue against the duty and efficacy of prayer; founding their sophistry upon the unchangeable decrees

of God; and, devil-like, quote scripture to support their own impiety. Is it not written, say they, that *with God there is no variableness nor shadow of turning?* This is a mere fallacy. God's hearkening to, or being moved by the prayers we put up to him, doth not in the least clash with his unchangeable decrees. We grant, when God is pleased to give us those things which without our prayers he would not have done, there is a change; but not in God: for God resolved that if we humbly and heartily beg such or such things at his hands, we should have them; but if not, we should go without them. Therefore, when upon our prayers we obtain that grace, or that blessing, which we had not before, it is not he that is changed, but us. We, by performing the conditions he required of us, looking with another aspect to him, do entitle ourselves to quite different treatment from him, than we could claim before we were changed from our wicked course of life, by making ourselves capable of receiving those benefits, which before we were not capable of.

When this objection has failed, then they rest upon GOD'S *infinite* and *essential goodness*. We grant that the goodness of God is infinite, and that he governs the world in the best way that is possible, and consequently he always will do that which is best, let us behave ourselves ever so badly. Yet doth it from this follow, that we shall have all such things as we stand in need of, without praying for them? No. Because the same God, that will do always what is absolutely best for his creatures, knows that it is best for them, that in order to their partaking of his benefits, they should pray for them; if they do not, he knows it is best they should be denied such things. Whence the necessity of God's acting for the best doth not in the least destroy the necessity of prayer in order to our obtaining what we stand in need of. God will do always that which is best: but we are mistaken if we think it for the best, that we should have our necessities supplied without the use of prayer; because it is the means appointed by God to obtain them.

VI. *Of Repentance.*

To prayer it is necessary to subjoin the duty of REPENTANCE: a duty which the apostle St. Paul particularly testifies to be due to God; because, all sin being forbidden of God, we never tansgress his commands, whether in regard to our neighbour or ourselves, but we incur his displeasure; and must dread his justice, except we repent. Wherefore, says the church; 'The grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God (we may) rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent'. This repentance is an entire change of heart and mind, which produces the like change in our lives and conversations; so that to repent of our sins is to be convinced we have done amiss: whence follows hearty sorrow for having foolishly neglected the most important concern of our lives, and done what in us lies to make ourselves everlastingly miserable; that we have been ungrateful to our mighty benefactor, and unfaithful to our best friend; that we have affronted heaven with those very blessings we have received thence; and that we have despised the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, which should have led us to a thorough change of our life and conversation. And this sorrow for our sins must be expressed, by humbly confessing them to almighty God, with shame and confusion of face, by an utter abhorrence and detestation of them, by being heartily troubled for what we have done amiss, and resolving not to do the like any more; and by testifying the reality of our inward sorrow, by all those ways that we find naturally occur in other cases that afflict us: as in fasting, weeping, mourning, and praying: it being very fit, that as the soul and body have been partakers in the same sins, so they should join together in the same humiliation and firm resolution of amendment. But

All sorrow for sin, and all purposes of amendment for the time to come, are not in all cases sufficient to be properly called repentance, or a hearty *contrition:* because if this sorrow and purpose of amendment arise not from a pure love of God, and deep sense of our own foul ingratitude in offending so good and gracious a Being but only from a dread of his justice, and fear of being punished for transgressions: our repentance and good purposes, though they carry with them the appearance of ever so much truth and reality, ought justly to be suspected as insufficient. Which duty therefore does not only hence appear to be necessary, but it is strongly enforced, even with the force of command, when our Saviour declares, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

The best method to make such a resolution of amendment *effectual* is to extend it to all the particulars of our duty, obliging ourselves to have a respect to all God's commands, and to avoid every thing his law condemns. Thus true repentance must be *pure*, *constant*, and *persevering* in its effects; that is, it must put a man into such a state, as that he will not any more return wilfully unto sin. He therefore, that repents, ought to be exceedingly fearful of relapsing into sin, as one that is recovering out of a dangerous and almost mortal sickness. Whenever he wilfully relapses, he makes his case worse than it was at first, and his disease more in danger of being mortal; it becomes much harder for him to renew himself unto repentance, and much more difficult to procure pardon. It is true, evil habits are not to be rooted out at once, and vicious customs to be overcome in a moment. So long therefore as a man does not return wilfully and deliberately into the habit of sin, many surprises and interruptions in the struggle with a customary vice may be consistent with the progress of repentance: but it is then only that it becomes complete and effectual, when the evil habit is so entirely rooted out, that the man thenceforward obeys the commandments of God without looking back, and returns no more to the sins he has condemned. Let no man therefore think that he has truly repented of any deadly sin, so long as he continues

to practice and repeat it. He may fast, and pray and lament, and use all the apparent signs of repentance imaginable; but God will never esteem his repentance true, nor accept it as available to the forgiveness of sin, till he sees it pure, and constant, and persevering.

Repentance not to be delayed. It is mere delusion and unpardonable stupidity for man, who has not the power of his own life, and should he be cut off in the midst of his sins must be eternally punished, to delay this great and necessary work for the present, and defer it to some future opportunity: either till the heat of youth is over, or till sickness, or old age, overtakes him. And it is not only the greatest folly to venture a matter of such consequence upon such an uncertainty as future time, which we cannot be sure of; and to defer a necessary work to the most unfitting season of performing it; but it is highly wicked, in that we abuse God's patience, who gives up opportunity for it at present, and prefer the slavery of sin before his service; it is a contempt of his laws, and of that wrath, which is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness: therefore we may justly fear, that such a proceeding may provoke God to withdraw that grace, which will then be necessary for the exercise of our repentance, though he should give us time and opportunity for so great a work. This is indeed a melancholy consideration: and what I say to awaken men out of this fatal lethargy, and to inspire them with a just sense of their danger, but intreat them to consider, that unless they repent, they will certainly perish? Through the times of ignorance God winked, yet now he commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained. A day when the sinners will in vain call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and to hide them: and when that dreadful sentence shall be pronounced, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. This is sufficient to show us the

great necessity of denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and of living righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world.

Of Death-bed Repentance. From this we may conclude concerning the times and frequent returns of our repentance. If we are daily guilty of any sin, we should repent every day; because sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. We may be instructed in this custom by the children of this world in the management of their temporal concerns: they teach us, that short reckonings are the safest means to a fair and unperplexed account. We should repent before all solemn days, the blessed sacrament, &c. The time of affliction is a strong call to repentance: when sickness, or pains, or outward calamities, or a wounded spirit attack us, we are soon sensible of our own inability: and whither should we fly for refuge? Break off thy sins by repentance, says Daniel, lest ye be punished with those who despise the chastisements of the Lord. The approach of death is the most awakening season for repentance: and I fear most men's repentance sets sail from this dangerous port. Not that we pretend to set bounds to the goodness and mercy of that Lord, who declares that he wills not the death of a sinner; and, whenever a soul is raised from the sleep of sin, it must be ascribed unto the spirit of God calling her to repentance. Consequently it would be rash and dangerous for us to assert the impossibility of a death-bed repentance. Yet, it is certain, that without the particular grace of God no man will be able to repent upon his *death-bed*; and it is no wise reasonable to expect these extraordinary influences, when the ordinary means of grace have been neglected all our life long. He who long pursues a vicious course, and returns not till the latter end of his days, must never expect either to live or die in so great peace, or so assured a prospect of being happy in the other world, though he be ever so diligent and sincere in his religion, as he who begins early. All his hopes will be mingled with sad fears of his condition; the sense of the many grievous sins of his life,

so long persisted in, will still be afflicting his conscience; and he will still be doubtful that he hath sufficiently repented of them, and that God hath received him to favour. This is the unavoidable consequence of putting off the business of religion to our latter days. Wherefore,

It is to be feared, and it is highly probable, that whoever defers it till that time, will never repent at all; or if he does, his penitential resolutions being founded upon such temporary principles as the fear of death, and the absence of temptation, they will seldom prove strong and vigorous enough to produce a thorough reformation; as is plain in the case of those that recover, among whom there are very few that are true and constant to those purposes of amendment, which they formed upon the prospect of approaching death. Therefore make no delay in this great and necessary work, for there can be no repentance in the grave; and we are taught by the church, that the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, and invocation of saints, is grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God, And

Length of time will add strength to our evil inclinations, and weaken our good resolutions. Can the man who has cherished sin all his life in his bosom, and wilfully neglected, if not abhorred, God and his means of grace, ever hope to be so thoroughly changed in a moment, as effectually to hate sin, and turn unto the God of his salvation with all his heart? Or, again; what hopes can a man entertain, that he shall find time and opportunity for this necessary duty, when the little remains of life are filled up with continual distractions and afflictions, which are the necessary effects of those diseases that commonly bring us to the grave?

VII. *Of Fasting.*

To this duty of repentance we commonly find the duty of FASTING joined in scripture; and we therefore shall act most prudently and safely to conform to that rule. Fasting, in a strict sense, implies a total abstinence from all meat and drink from morning to evening; and then to refresh ourselves sparingly as to the quantity, and not delicately as to the quality, of the nourishment. But, in a large sense, fasting implies an abstinence from some kind of food, especially from flesh and wine; or a deferring eating beyond the usual hours, as the primitive christians did on their set days till three in the afternoon, to which hour in those days their public assemblies continued. By this mortification some *self-denial* is designed to our bodily appetites; for no abstinence can partake of the nature of fasting, except there be something in it that afflicts us; and nature seems to suggest it as a proper means to express sorrow and grief, and as a fit method to dispose our minds toward the consideration of any thing that is serious. And therefore all nations from ancient times have used fasting as a part of repentance, and as a means to turn away God's anger; as it is plain in the case of the Ninevites, which was a notion common to them with the rest of mankind. And although our Saviour hath left no positive precept about fasting, yet he joins it with almsgiving and prayer, which are unquestionable duties; and the directions he gave in his admirable sermon upon the mount, concerning the performance of it, sufficiently evince the necessity of the duty, which, if governed by such rules as our Saviour there lays down, will be accepted by God, and openly rewarded by him, when he judges us according to our works.

Therefore the ancient christians were very exact both in their weekly and yearly fasts: their weekly fasts were kept on Wednesday and Friday; because on the one our Lord was betrayed, and on the other crucified for our sins. But no fast may be accounted

religious, but such as is undertaken to restrain the looser appetites of the flesh, and to keep the body under subjection; to give the mind liberty and ability to consider and reflect while it is actually engaged in divine service, or preparing for some solemn part of it; to humble ourselves before God under a due sense of our sins, and the misery to which they expose us; to turn away his anger, and to supplicate for his mercy and favour; to express revenge against ourselves, for the abuse of those good things God allows us to enjoy, and of which we have made ourselves unworthy by sinful excesses; when it is used as a piece of self denial, in order the better to command our fleshly appetites, and as a means to raise in our minds a due valuation of the happiness of the other world, when we despise the enjoyments of this: and above all to make it acceptable to God, it should be accompanied with fervent prayer, and a charitable relief of the poor, whose miseries we may the better guess at, when we are bearing some of the inconveniences of hunger; always taking care to avoid all presumption, never to fast under a supposition, that we merit thereby, nor in such an extreme manner, as may prejudice our health, and indispose us for the service of God. For the church assures us that 'Voluntary works, over and above God's commandments, which are called works of *supererogation*, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare, that they do not only rendered unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do *more* for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ says plainly, when ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, *We are unprofitable servants.*'

THE SECOND PART

OF THE NEW

Whole Duty of Man:

CONTAINING

OUR DUTY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.

SUNDAY VIII.

I. *Of the duty of* subjects *to their* prince* or chief magistrate: *and* II. *Of the* prince or chief magistrate *to his* subjects. III. *Of the duty to civil* magistrates; *and of their duty both to the* sovereign *and to the* people. IV. *Of the duty of* pastors, *and their superior education.* V. *Of the duty of* children *to their* natural parents; *to reverence, to love, and to obey them in all lawful commands, and in respect of* marriage; *and* VI. *Of* going to law *with parents.* VII. *Of the duty of* parents *to their* children; *to instruct them, to put them to business, and to provide for them in the best manner they are able; and* VIII. *In what cases they may* disinherit *them.*

I. *Of the duty of* subjects *to their* prince or chief magistrate;

HAVING gone through the duties of the FIRST TABLE, I shall here just remark, that the *ten* commandments were originally delivered to *Moses* by

* It must be recollected this work was originally printed in England, and of course, the Titles made use of in *this part*, applies to the government of that nation. However, as the relative duties of all men, and their Civil Parent, must be very nearly the same in promoting the general good; so the American Republican has only to make use of the words President or Chief Magistrate in the place of the titles alluded to.

God himself in *two* tables. The *first* table, containing our duty to *God*, consists of the first *four* commandments: the first three direct whom we are to worship, and in what manner; and the fourth appoints a particular time for that purpose. The *second* table consists of the last *six* commandments, which contain our duty to our neighbour. So that the first four commandments set forth our duty to God; the fifth teaches us the duty we owe to our superiors among men; and the last five declare our duty toward all men in general, with regard to the life, the property, the reputation of our neighbour, or whatever else may in any way affect him. I say, having already treated of the duties of the *first table*, the order in which the *commandments* stand, leads us now to consider our *duty to our* NEIGHBOUR. And it is observable, comparitively speaking, that the importance of every duty, and the malignity of every breach of our duty, stand higher in the catalogue of virtues and vices, according to their rank and priority, in the ten commandments. Thus the sins of disbelieving God, or worshipping idols, condemned in the first and second precepts, are more heinous crimes than taking God's name in vain, and breaking the sabbath. And the sins against heaven, prohibited in the first four commandments, are more heinous provocations than the transgressions committed against man, in the last six. Again, the duties we owe to societies, or the relative duties, are fastened upon us by stronger ties than those we owe to single persons, by reason of the extensiveness of their influence and their general good. And we must at sight allow, that murder is more criminal than adultery; adultery more criminal than theft; theft more criminal than slander; and slander worse than coveting. From this reasoning I choose to assign the first rank to the *fifth commandment*, when treating of the *duties* of the SECOND TABLE. And,

As the order of the commandments, the dictates of nature, and the ordinance of God have placed the *parental* authority at the head of the *second table*, as

containing the primary social and christian duties, which are most prevalent upon peace and piety, and consist chiefly of the civil, spiritual and natural parents: so I intend, *first* to treat of the relative duties between the *civil parent* or *prince* and the *people*; because we are commanded to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the *king*, as supreme; or unto *governors*, as unto them that are sent by him. In particular kingdoms, the king is the fountain of authority, from whom all power descends upon lower magistrates; so, in the universal monarchy of the world, God is the fountain of all power and dominion, from whom all authority, and right of government descend upon princes. Therefore, seeing that sovereigns are God's vicegerents, and do reign by his authority, they have also a right to be *honoured* and supported by their subjects; because they bear God's character, and do shine with the rays of his majesty: and consequently it is an affront to God's own majesty for subjects to contemn and vilify their sovereigns, to expose their faults and uncover their nakedness, and lampoon and libel their persons and actions: therefore never speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

And since sovereigns are ordained by God for the common good, to protect the innocent, and avenge the injured, and to guard the rights of their people against foreign and domestic fraud and violence, they must hereupon have an undoubted right to be *aided* and *assisted* by their subjects; because without their aid it will be impossible for them to accomplish the ends of their sovereignty; and therefore for subjects to refuse to aid their sovereign with their *purses*, or persons, when legally required; or by any indirect means to withdraw themselves from the assistance his country's real necessities calls for, is to detain from him a just right that is owing to his character: And for this cause pay you *tribute* also, for they are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: *tribute* to whom tribute is due, *cus-*

tom to whom custom, *fear*, to whom fear, *honour* to whom honour. And to this the apostle subjoins the tribute of your *prayers:* I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. And moreover,

They have a right to be obeyed in all things, wherein they do not interfere with the commands of God: for in obeying them we obey God, who commands by their mouths and wills, by their laws and proclamations: and as he, who refuses to obey the inferior magistrate's command, doth in so doing disobey the chief magistrate unless he commands the contrary; so he who disobeys his sovereign, who is God's magistrate, doth, in so doing, disobey God; unless it be where God hath commanded him to the contrary. While he commands lawful things, he hath a right to be obeyed; because his commands are stampted with divine authority, and are thereby rendered sacred, never to be violated.

II. *Of the prince or chief magistrate to his subjects.*

Sovereign power being ordained by God for the public good to guard and defend the innocent, to shelter and relieve the oppressed, to fence and propagate true religion, to adjust and balance private rights and interests; every subject hath a right to be protected thereby, so far as can be in his person and legal rights, in his just liberties and privileges, and sincere profession of the true religion: and that sovereign, who doth not employ his power to these purposes, but through wilful and affected error or ignorance, imposes a false religion on his people; or betrays, oppresses, or enslaves them himself, or permits others so to do, either out of malice or carelessness; is an injurious invader of the rights and properties of his people; and shall one day answer for it at the tribunal of God, who is the king of kings.

III. *Our Duty to Magistrates.*

In like manner, there is a relation of *judges*, and *justices*, *governors* of towns, cities, and provinces, and other inferior magistrates, who by virtue of that authority, which is stamped upon them, have a right to be honoured, supported and obeyed by the people, according to the degree and extent of their authority and power: because, wherever it is placed, authority is a sacred thing, as being a ray and image of the divine majesty, and as such may justly claim honour and reverence from all men. Whoever contemns the lowest degree of authority offers an affront to the highest: for he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and whoever contemns the inferior magistrates, doth therein contemn the Civil Parent. We are not to evade our obedience, under any pretence of the unworthiness or personal faults and defects of the magistrates in commission; but we ought to consider that their authority is a sacred thing, and, as such challenges our reverence and obedience by a right that cannot be dispensed with: therefore for men to behave themselves forwardly, stubbornly, or irreverently, toward a lawful magistrate, is to detain from him his due, and offer an unjust affront to his character; and consequently, let a man be ever so good in other instances, such a rebellious behaviour will bespeak him highly dishonest and injurious in the sight of God, And,

As we have seen the relation of inferior magistrates entitles them to the people's reverence and obedience; so the relation, which the Ruler and people bear to them entitles them also to their fidelity, vigilance, and justice; because inferior magistrates are the trustees for himself and his people; and in their hands he deposits the honour, security, and rights of his dominion, together with the safeguard and protection of the just and legal rights of his people: therefore upon their acceptance of his trust, by which they engage themselves faithfully to discharge it, the king or chief magistrate acquires a right to their faithful and vigilant care, to see that his authority

be supported, the laws obeyed, his person, government, and properties secured; and the people acquire a right to be protected by them in their persons, reputations, liberties and estates. Besides, they should command without insulting, reprove with meekness, punish unwillingly, and never without manifest tokens of tenderness and compassion. Consequently,

So far as they are wilfully failing in any of these matters, they do unjustly betray the trust committed to them, falsify their own engagements, and under the mask of authority are public robbers of mankind, and may and ought to be punished as such by those laws they have violated.

IV. *Our Duty to Pastors.*

A *second* distinguished branch of the *parental* authority, where the duties are mutual and reciprocal, is that of *spiritual parents*, or *pastors* and *people*. These spiritual parents discharge the like good offices to our souls, which natural parents do to our bodies; therefore we proceed to enquire into the duty of the people to their *ministers*. The christians of the first ages always expressed a great value and esteem for their clergy; because they were sensible there could be no church without priests, and that it was by their means God conveyed to them all those mighty blessings which were purchased by the death of Christ. Upon this account also should be founded our love of them; forasmuch as we are taught so to do by the apostle, who said to the Thessalonians, And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; to *esteem* them very highly *in love* for their works sake. If then we are taught to *honour* and *esteem* our spiritual governors, pastors, or ministers, for their works sake, we must treat them with respect, considering them as those that bear the great character of ambassadors from Christ, as St. Paul calls them; and as instruments of conveying to us the great blessings we are capable of receiving, because they relate to our eternal salvation; and, consequently, regarding them as com-

missioned by him to that holy function: wherefore the authority they have received to preside over christians, as governors of the church, must always be owned to come from God; and this religious regard to their divine mission must be expressed in the whole course of our conduct toward their persons. We respect and reverence them by our words and actions, expressing all the honour and esteem we have for their character, treating their persons with great civility in conversation; speaking all the good we can of them in their absence, and throwing a veil over their infirmities: never making them the objects of our light mirth, no, proclaiming their failings in order to reproach their persons, because it may tend to debase their ministry; not using any scurrilous words, or contemptuous behaviour toward them; because the disrespect cast upon them is an affront to their Master, whose person they represent: according to what our Saviour told his disciples when he sent them out to preach the gospel, He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

Nor did people of ancient times rest in this outward behaviour: for they gave all imaginable proof of a sincere and hearty love and esteem for their persons, by *maintaining* them liberally out of their shipwrecked fortunes, and cheerfully *submitting* to the severe discipline enjoined by them, from a sense of that authority ministers have received from Christ, the great bishop of souls; and in pursuance of those precepts which our Saviour and St. Paul have left us for that purpose. So we must also obey our spiritual governors, not only in whatsoever they out of scripture declare to us to be God's commands, either by public preaching or private exhortations, because they are the messengers of the Lord of hosts, so long as their doctrines are agreeable to the word of God; but likewise in submitting to that discipline they shall inflict, either to recover us from a state of folly, or to preserve us from falling into such a state; from a pure sense of that right they have to command, entrusted to them by our Saviour, and of that great penalty we are liable to by our contempt: for he that despiseth them, despiseth him that sent them. We are accordingly charged

to obey them that have the rule over us, and to submit ourselves; because they watch for our souls, as they that must give an account, And though it may be we are deprived of other opportunities of doing them any substantial service; yet it is in the power of the meanest of us all to *pray* for, or to address heaven in their behalf; that they may be defended from the malice and ill will of bad men; that they may have the countenance and protection of the great and powerful; that their zealous labours in God's vineyard may be attended with success; and that they may turn many to righteousness, according to the gospel of Christ.

From this we learn that it is no diminution to greatness of birth, or any personal excellency, to be devoted to the ministration of God's holy word and sacraments. We speak here particularly of the christian priesthood; whose priests are called the ministers of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God, to whom he hath committed the word of reconciliation, the glory of Christ, ambassadors for Christ, in Christ's stead, co-workers with him, angels of the churches. Because they act by commission from him; they are his officers and immediate attendants, and in particular manner the servants of his house. They are employed in his peculiar business, empowered and authorized to negotiate and transact for God, in all the outward administrations of the covenant of grace, or of reconciliation between God and man, by commission from Jesus Christ.

Thus under the gospel they are instituted to dispense spiritual food for the nourishment of christians, to feed them with God's holy word and sacraments, to speak the hidden wisdom that God ordained before the world; which is committed to their care, to be preserved entire from being maimed or perverted, as the sacraments are to be rightly and duly administered to his people. For which end and purpose they were ordained by Christ himself, the great shepherd and bishop of our souls, who glorified not himself to be a high priest; but had his commission from God the Father, and after his resurrection invested his apostles with the same commission his Father had given him before; which evidently con-

tains an authority of ordaining others, and a power of transferring that commission to others, so long as the world endures. Therefore, without his express commission, no man ought to take upon himself, or communicate to others, a power to sign and seal covenants in the name of Christ.

The apostles and their successors exercised this commission in all places, and even in opposition to the rulers that then were; so that the church subsisted as a distinct society from the state till the fourth century. Whence we infer, a man may have exceeding good parts, and a great talent in speaking; he may have likewise attained considerable skill in the scriptures and other sorts of learning, and have all the other qualifications which are needful to make him a very useful minister of the church; but still this alone, without a lawful call, doth not empower him to take that office upon him. If a man do not come in this way, he is not a lawful shepherd, but an intruder into Christ's flock, whatever natural or acquired abilities he may have to fit him for the employment. And great purity of life is required of those that are invested with such an honourable character, whereby they may in some measure be qualified to administer in holy things, and by their example guide those they instruct by their doctrine, which is of Christ; and it is an argument of a prophane temper to contemn those who are commissioned by God himself to that sacred office.

For though they may be inferior to others in some human accomplishments; yet God hath promised particularly to assist them in the faithful discharge of their holy office, and has blessed them with many personal qualifications to challenge our esteem and respect. For, as long as piety and virtue, learning and knowledge, have any credit and reputation in the world, and men are concerned that others should be formed to the same valuable principles, that their minds should be cultivated, and their manners regulated; so long the clergy will have a good title to the honour and esteem of all those that are truly wise and good. Did we only consider the method of their very education, we shall find it would give them great advantages for their improvement in all sorts of

necessary and polite learning, and raise them above the level of those with whom they are equal in other circumstances; and, the subject of their constant studies being matter of piety and religion, it is reasonable to suppose they live under more lively and stronger impressions of the other world than the rest of mankind: and experience sufficiently convinces us how much the nobility and gentry of this kingdom are beholden to their care for those impressions of piety and knowledge which are stamped upon their education, and diffused into their families. For, even in the most ignorant ages, what learning flourished, it was in their body, and by their care was conveyed down to us. They have been in the most dissolute times the greatest examples of piety, and we have yet remaining many eminent monuments of their magnificence as well as useful charities.

And should it happen that the ministers of God may not act suitably to the dignity of their character, yet we must not contemn them; for their character, should certainly defend them from contempt; and the relation they have to God should secure them from ill treatment: in order to which it is necessary to consider, that as there is an inherent holiness, whereby men's actions and affections are in some measure conformable to the laws of God, in which sense good men in all ages were esteemed holy; so there is a relative holiness, which consists in some peculiar relation to God's service, which may be ascribed to things, times, places, and persons. Thus the tribe of Levi was called the holy tribe, as those that are dedicated to the service of Christ under the gospel are called Christ's ministers; not that it was always true of them, that they walked before God in purity and piety, and turned many from iniquity, for too often they have gone out of the way, and caused many to stumble at the law; but because they had a particular relation to God in the performance of that worship, which was then paid to him by his appointment. Therefore,

As to that objection, that many ministers are obnoxious for their wicked lives; it is granted: What then? Does their wickedness make void the ordinances of God? No: For as the church teacheth, 'Although in the visible

church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments; yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their *own name*, but in *Christ's* and do minister by *his* commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the word of God, and in the receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such, as *by faith*, and *rightly* do receive the sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men'. And this we may compare to a pardon passed by an immoral king, or a sentence pronounced by a wicked judge; which are always looked upon as valid to all intents and purposes; because their efficacy depends not upon the qualification of those in commission, but upon the sovereign authority whence they both receive their commission so to do. In like manner, the advantages we receive by their ministrations, and the relation they have to God, should still preserve some respect for the persons even of bad ministers. And therefore as ministers are clothed with flesh and blood like other men, we ought not to be prejudiced against religion, because some few are overcome by the follies and infirmities common to command.

But where we have a thorough information of their scandalous lives, it is doubtless a better demonstration of christian zeal to make proof of it before their lawful superiors; that, being found guilty, they may by just judgment be deposed; than either by our words or actions to affront or contemn them ourselves, or to provoke others so to do. Because the despising the persons, and exposing the conduct of our pastors, diminishes that credit and effect which their spiritual administrations ought to have upon the minds of men, and makes them less capable of doing that good which their profession obliges them to attempt; for, as much as we take from the opinion of their piety and integrity, so much we lessen their power in promoting the interest of religion,

whose fate very much depends upon the reputation of those who feed and govern the flock of Christ.—Wherefore the enemies of religion, being very sensible of this, omit no opportunity of exposing their persons, and representing their sacred function only as a trade, whereby they procure an advantageous subsistence; which is a mean insinuation, and may be easily confuted by these considerations. Is it not fit that they, who quit all other methods of procuring subsistence, should live of that gospel they preach? and though men may be swayed by interest, yet the truth and falsehood of things nowise depend upon it; and the measures of judging concerning them are quite of another sort. Nothing but sufficient evidence should convince an impartial man concerning the truth of what is asserted. And it is most reasonable to suppose, that they, who make it their business to search into these matters, should be best acquainted with the grounds of conviction, and manner of settling such points. Besides, we find that our value for the laws of the land, and the art of physic, is no way abated by the great advantages those make who follow the profession of either of them.

From all these duties which we owe to the ministers of God's holy word and sacraments we learn, that the contempt of the clergy generally proceeds from a contempt of religion, or, when it takes its rise from a more innocent cause, is very apt to lead to it; because a due regard to religion can never be maintained without a proportionable respect to the ministers of that religion. And though it may pass for a current maxim among some, that priests of all religions are the same; yet I am of the opinion, it will appear a much truer observation by experience, that they of all religions, who contemn the priesthood, will be found the same both as to their principles and practices; sceptical in the one, and dissolute in the other.

So that one proper method to increase our reward in the next world is to do all good offices to those that are dedicated to the service of the altar; because he that encourages and enables a prophet for his duty,

hath his interest in his work, and consequently in the reward that belongs thereto. Such as receive a prophet out of respect to his function shall receive a prophet's reward. So our zeal to defend the rights of the sacred order ought the more frequently to exert itself, by how much more the faithful discharge of their function exposes them to the ill-will and malice of wicked and unreasonable persons. Besides, there is no better way to maintain the peace of the church, and edify the body of Christ, than by preserving a great respect for our spiritual governors, and by submitting to their lawful commands.

Now, if what I have here said makes any impression upon men's minds, as it will most certainly, if calmly and seriously considered; it will startle the boldest sinner to find, that in contemning this order of men he affronts his Maker; and in despising the ministers of the gospel he despiseth him that sent them.

SUNDAY VIII. Part II.

V. *Duty of Children to their Parents.*

A *third* great branch of the paternal authority relate to the mutual duties of *natural parents* and their *children.* For we are commanded to *honour* our *father and mother;* that is, to love, to reverence, to obey, to succour, and to support them. Children must shew *respect* to their parents, and must pay them external honour and civility; for as love comprises all kinds of honour, so it is an offence against natural decency to see children bear themselves on the square with their parents, to answer them rudely, or to be wanting in respect, in looks or gesture, in words or in deed. Hearken, says Solomon unto thy father that begot thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old: and let such as neglect the practice of these and the like exhortations, dread the threatening of this wise man, who also declares, that the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young

eagles shall eat it. But if parents, through fondness or want of judgment, take off the restraint, and remove the bar that kept their children at a due distance, they too often have reason to repent thereof: and if no misconduct ensue, it is not owing to their discretion, but to the grace of God working early in the children's hearts. Cocker thy child, says the author of Ecclesiasticus, and he shall make thee afraid; play with him, and he shall bring thee to heaviness: bow down his neck while he is young, lest he be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart. Children must not pry into the infirmities and failings of their parents, but conceal them. And that children may discharge this part of their duty better, as it is partly in the parents power, so should it be their great care not to misbehave in the sight of their children, nor set them bad examples. Respect is founded upon some supposed excellency, worth and superiority; and when parents admit their children to an equality, and make them privy to their indiscretions, follies, and miscarriages, they invite contempt. And

We shew *love* to our parents, when we take such courses as will increase our mutual affection, and decline all things that may lessen the same; which love must be expressed by our endeavours to do them all the good in our power, abhorring whatever may seem to grieve or in any wise trouble them, and praying for them. It is so natural and reasonable to love our parents, that few will own the want of it, even when they know they do not love them. And this love and affection will appear to be founded on the principles of common gratitude, because parental love is constantly exerting itself in all the beneficial acts it can invent; supplies all the wants of helpless infancy; secures from all the hazards of heedless childhood and unthinking youth; shapes the body, preserving it straight and upright; keeps the limbs in order, fitting them for their natural uses; and bears with many troubles and hardships: and though these matters appear so slight, and are seldom thought upon, yet the

miseries that arise where this love is abated, are not inconsiderable; some of them have an influence on us as long as we live. Besides, this affection informs the mind and regulates the manners, trains up the reason, exercises the memory, instructs them to argue and understand their little affairs, and educates and fits them for greater matters: this brings them first to God in baptism, and keeps them after in the ways of religion, by instilling into them virtuous principles; by remembering them of their several duties; by encouraging them in good, with favours and rewards; by reproving and correcting them, when evil; and by deterring them from vice. These are the ways parents take to make their children happy; not to mention those endless and innumerable labours and troubles that consume their whole life, to make them happy with the good things of this world; therefore if benefits can be the foundation of love in children, they must love their parents who bestow so many upon them. But supposing the parents endeavours after happiness should not succeed to their wishes, as very often they will not; yet if there is no want of love, the obligation is the same on the child. How therefore can we account for the wickedness of those children, who dare curse their parents either openly or in their heart? They who curse them to their face, should dread the sentence of the Lord, who says, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. And whoever wishes the death of their parents, thro' impatience of their government, or covetous desires of their possessions, should dread to meet with an untimely death from an all-seeing God, as a punishment of so heinous a crime.

The next duty that children owe to their parents is *obedience:* Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right and well pleasing unto the Lord.—This is a certain principle: while children want understanding to direct their choice and will, they should have no will but that of their parents; and therefore should obey, till arrived at a more sound judgment. Parents must be allowed to discern what is most pro-

per for their children; and though they be now and then mistaken, yet it is always safest to follow their commands and instructions, whose main end and purpose is to do them good. Nothing can be plainer, than that parents love their children dearly, and without design, and are older, wiser, and more experienced; and therefore the fittest to command, and to be obeyed by their children: and for this reason God, to show us how fit it is to obey our parents, calls himself our Father, and from that relation calls for our obedience likewise. Let then stubborn, headstrong children consider the ties they have to be obedient to their parents, and they will find both pleasure and security in being so: the approbation of all, and the blessing of God goes along with it; whereas, nothing but trouble of mind, sorrow, shame, infamy, and the displeasure of Almighty God, attend disobedience to their good and wholesome commands.

But if the command of a parent is to do evil, or requires his child, to lie, or steal, or to do any other act, by which the laws of God are broken, he must prefer his duty to God: for we must obey God rather than man. The commands of parents must not cause them to do what God our heavenly father forbids, or to neglect what he commands; because the authority of God is first and greatest: nothing is to stand in competition with it. But even in this case the commands of God must be plain and evident; not a doubtful or disputed thing. In like manner, we are not to obey our parents, when they command things contrary to the laws of the land; the public good being to be preferred to private inclinations. But then even when we disobey, we must do it with great modesty and tenderness; not with upbraidings and reproaches, not with high and scornful refusals, but by declining and avoiding such commands, with all the gentle arts and methods of submission possible; for even in a righteous cause the language of children must be humble to their parents.

And as our obedience to parents is to cease, where the authority of God, or the government, has laid a

prohibition; so it is supposed not to be required, where the thing under command carries an invincible antipathy to our inclinations. The common instance of this kind is in the case of marriage, which being a state and condition, upon which the happiness or misery of life depends, cannot be engaged in with any hopes of felicity, without a real affection on the one side, and a good assurance of it on the other. Now when a parent, overlooking all this, will enjoin a child, upon mere motives of advantage, to marry, where there is no foundation of love, nor prospect of content; it is hardly to be thought, that such instances are to be complied with. Parents, indeed, are supposed to have a great hand in this affair: the examples in scripture, as well as the laws of most nations, favour their direction in this case: and therefore they are to take all due care to see their children well disposed of, according to their age, quality, and tempers, and not let the prospect of fortune and estate overweigh all other considerations of form and favour, birth and education, virtue and good qualities; and when they have done this, the children are to obey as far as possibly they can, and give up the little objections of fancy to the more mature deliberations of their parents. Under the law, the maid that had made a vow was not suffered to perform it without the consent of the parent. And it is expressly said, that they shall honour and obey them; and to reconcile marrying against consent with honouring their parents, as marrying against command with obeying them, is vain, when there is a just reason for the parents refusal. But when, on the contrary, parents offer to their children what they cannot possibly like and what all considerate people cannot but disapprove, there is no doubt to be made, but that, in such a case, children may refuse; and if their refusal be made with decency and humility, that it will not fall under the head of sinful disobedience. For if the son would marry against the consent of the parent, or the father obtrude a match on the son, the plain resolution is in each case: the father and the son have

severally a negative; for notwithstanding parents have a great authority, yet they may abuse it; they are not incapable of doing injury to their children, who are to be subject to their parents, but not slaves to their passions.

VI. *Duty of Children to their Parents.*

He that suffers wrong may also be righted: the laws of God do not forbid this; and the laws of the land are free and impartial: they make no difference of persons, know no relation; justice, is in this respect, to be blind. A son or daughter may, without offence to God's laws, appeal to the laws of the land against their parents in some cases; as for matters of contract, estate, inheritance, or money, when the child cannot live without it; but for a light injury, or a thing easy to be borne, a child should not implead his parent: the hardship must be near intolerable, the injustice great and pressing, when a man's conscience can permit him to go to law with his parent: it should therefore be plain that the parent is much in the wrong, violating the laws of nature, and putting off the parental love and tenderness, before a child should seek for justice. Nevertheless, this duty is somewhat altered in the case of mothers, when they hasten to second marriages prejudicial to the children of the former husbands. The reason of going to law with them will appear more urgent than with fathers, or with mothers continuing in the state of widowhood; because they have translated their affection and interest to another family; and most of the comforts, arising from such contested money, go to strangers, to whom the children have no obligation of parental duty. For, when a new affection intervenes, then the prospect is disturbed, and the new wife is supposed to make herself acceptable to her new choice by carrying with her all the advantages of fortune she can get, and in such cases often forgets her children and former love: in this case, when the reason is manifest, and the occasion just, the suit may be commenced

but must be managed with all imaginable care and tenderness.

Another instance of duty, which children owe their parents, is to minister to all their wants under the infirmities of body, the decay of understanding, and the poverty of their condition. Supporting is a scripture notion of honouring: as St. Paul distinguishes this duty of succouring parents under their necessities by the name of piety. Let children or nephews first learn to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: and the refusal to provide for those of his own house is loaded with heavy guilt; He hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. The wicked Jews indeed made the word of God of none effect by their vows and traditions, and cancelling this duty: but on the contrary, God will cause dutiful behaviour to parents to recommend us to the good opinion of others: there being nothing makes men more acceptable to others, than such obedient behaviour: it is an ornament of a rich and noble child, and the best recommendation of the poor to favour, pity, and relief, to be known that they are helpful to their distressed parents. The author of Ecclesiasticus, exhorting to be helpful to parents, tells the children they shall find their account in so doing: My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth; if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not, when thou art in thy full strength: for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten, and instead of sins, it shall be added to build thee up; in the day of affliction it shall be remembered. This ought to be a daily remembrance to those children, who deny relief to their distressed parents, and will not part with their own excesses and superfluities, which are indeed their sins, to relieve the necessities of those to whom they owe their very being: or which is worse, in the midst of their pride, scorn to own their parents in their poverty. This is such pride and unnaturalness as God will never let go unpunished; for no unkindness nor fault of a parent can discharge the child of this duty, which God has commanded.

VII. *Duty of Parents to their Children.*

Hence it cannot be very difficult to collect that there is a duty also incumbent upon the *parent* to the child: a duty that is taught by nature, and enforced by the strongest terms in the gospel: which begins the moment the child is born, and never can be dispensed with so long as it lives, and is not wanting in its duty to its parents. For, did we only view the natural care of the very brutes for their young, it must be granted that the slothful, over-nice, or unnatural mother must read her own conviction, and neglecting or disdaining to *nurse* her own child, when able, must confess that the God of nature ordained that creature, who is blessed with a living offspring, to give the same its first nourishment. Thus much nature demands on the very first appearance of the child. And,

When we consider that the new-born babe is full of the stain and pollution of sin, which it inherits from our first parents through our loins (for man is conceived and born in sin, and before his age is a day long he is full of corruption) how diligent should parents be in bringing their children to that *baptism*, which was ordained by Christ to wash away our original corruption, to make us members of the church of Christ; and to give us a right to the adoption of the children of God, and to the reversion of the kingdom of heaven? Whoever neglects this part of their duty, are surely guilty of a great misdemeanour, and contempt of Christ's holy institution. Again,

As soon as the child can begin to learn, the parent must also begin to *train him up* in the way he should walk through every stage of his succeeding life. For children have souls as well as men; they soon discover their capacity of reasoning, and make it appear that they can learn the things of God and religion. The great God therefore expects that little children should be taught to know and love and worship him; for he hath not bestowed their early powers in vain. And as the child has promised to renounce the devil and all his works

to believe in God, and to serve him; so it is the parents duty to teach him, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what he has promised in that sacrament by his sureties; to carry him to hear sermons, to furnish him with an early knowledge of the christian belief, Lord's Prayer, and ten commandments, and all other things which a christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and that he be christianly and virtuously brought up to lead a godly and christian life. For all those, whom God shall esteem capable of duty and sinning, must be answerable for their own personal conduct; and how early he will begin to require this account, he only knows. And the very light of nature teaches us, that parents are entrusted with the care of their children in their younger years, to furnish their minds with the seeds of virtue and happiness, as well as to provide for their bodies food and raiment. Must the parent give him the best instructions he can in the affairs of this perishing life, and refuse and neglect it in things of everlasting moment and divine importance? Is it not better that children should know and serve God, because their parents teach them to do it, than that they should be ignorant of God, and live in a stupid neglect of him and his service? Can a religious parent satisfy himself with this philosophical pretence of not biassing the judgment of his children, and let them go on and die, before they arrive at manhood, in a state of shameful ignorance and rebellion against their maker? Are children entrusted to the affection and care of parents by the God of nature, for so deplorable an end as this? And will the life and soul of the child never be required at the parent's hand?

And surely, if parents had but that just share of tenderness and affection for their children that nature requires, or the scripture enjoins; if they did but look upon them as little parts of themselves, they could not forbear to acquaint them with the things that belong to their everlasting welfare. Many other arguments may accrue from experience and observation, to convince parents that it is their duty to bring their children up in the christian religion; to teach them what they are to believe and practise; to instruct them in the knowledge of God

and of Jesus Christ; to show them in what condition they are by nature, and to what they are advanced by grace; to how much misery their being descended from so corrupt an original had reduced them, and how their actual sins endangered them by exposing them to God's wrath, and what deliverance from them was wrought by Christ our Lord. For where this is wanting, neither wisdom, riches, nor honours, can make them happy; without this they will, with all the rest, be miserable. Therefore, if parents would have children honour them, and behave obediently, they must bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; they must furnish them with arguments both against error and vice and teach them the christian law, where they will see their duty, and find such lessons of instructions, such encouragements and promises of rewards, as will secure their honour, and respect their service and obedience. The way to educate children rightly, is to teach them early to deny themselves the gratification of those irregular appetites which nature has implanted. Self-will and an inclination to things forbidden, merely because they are forbidden, discover themselves even in our infancy; vice is the natural product of the soil; the more uncultivated the mind is, the more it is overrun with it: but virtue is the slow laborious result of repeated self-denials, hardships, and difficulties. I might add this also, as a small consideration, that, if parents take no care to inform their children of the duty they owe to God, they will quickly find that children will pay very little duty to their parents; and they will read their own crime of shameful negligence toward God, in the rebellion of their offspring against themselves. But, if care be taken to catechise them, they will, in all probability, prove the good ground that is spoken of by our Saviour: and when they come to years to choose for themselves, there is little doubt but they will voluntarily and heartily espouse the religion of Jesus Christ, and will find all the reason in the world to do so. Therefore, if it pleases God to bless you with children, begin very early to instil into their tender minds the principles of virtue and religion; teach them to remember their creator in the days of their youth, and

bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Set before them the example of a holy and religious life; and endeavour to wean them from the pride and vanity of the world, and from those hurtful lusts and passions, which tend only to make them miserable both here and hereafter. Instruct them in that knowledge which is useful and profitable, which will give them a right understanding of themselves and of their duty, and make them wise unto salvation. But if no care be taken of them, and the weeds of vice be suffered first to possess the soil, that is, of their passions, and lust, and pride, and sensuality, and love of the world have once taken up their hearts, it is very doubtful whether they will afterward be fit for the kingdom of God; whether they will ever be prepared and disposed for eternal life. It must be an extraordinary providence of God that must make them so.

Parents must take special care never, as the manner of too many is, to set their child a bad example; for while a child sees his parents give themselves up to drunkenness, or swearing, or any other notorious breach of God's commands, it can scarce be thought but that the child will too nearly copy after the parent's example, and think himself ill-used if the parent shall curb or correct him for his misdemeanors. And,

It is no less the parents duty, when they see their children falling into evil courses, to reclaim them, and prevent their misery; and though it anger them, they must not let their duty give place to the child's passion, but only regard what in likelihood will follow, and that is amendment; and not how it will be relished by their children. It is true parents are forbid to provoke their children to wrath; yet to use restraint, reproof, and correction in reason, though it provoke them to anger and impatience, is not to be forborne by parents. The laws of God and man have left the children to the parents, and will not punish them for doing that to them, which would be punishable if done to strangers; yet parents may not do any thing truly injurious to children; for nature gives them power to do them all the good they can, and only allows them the liberty of afflicting them for a

time, in order to their amendment. Where the parent's conscience tells him, that the affliction he is laying upon his child is not likely to do him good, it tells him he has no authority to do it, but that he is without natural affection. It should be the parent's care therefore, that he mistake not the silence of God's word, and the liberty that human laws leave to parents in the management of their children; that he mistake not these for the power and authority that nature gives him: for he may be unnatural to his children, though God's word prescribes him no rule how far he may proceed, and though human laws will allow what he does, and though his own temper incline him to inhuman courses; a parent may be unnatural for all these, and will be punished by our common parent for cruel usage, which breaks the spirits, so that they have no heart to set about any thing: when children perceive that all they say and do is ill-taken, they have no courage to go on; when they perceive their endeavours fruitless, when they do all they can to win the affections of parents, and find them still morose and untractable, it is natural to think they should be disconsolate, and give up all endeavours for the time to come. Such is the consequence of a severe and rugged treatment. But it seldom stops here: it produces a slavish and disingenuous fear of their parents, aud such a fear puts children upon mean shifts to make their peace, or to avoid their sight; they are never easy but at a distance; they cannot please with truth, and therefore try how they can succeed with falsehoods. And as it is a common observation, that love and kindness beget love; so nothing is more likely to beget hatred than constant ill usage; because that looks like the real fruit of hatred and ill-will. We can easily discern a difference between a sudden transient anger, and a settled disposition to severity: when anger becomes habitual, and parents are not provoked, but always upbraid and punish; then it is natural for the children to despair of pleasing them, and to conclude they are the objects of their hatred and aversion; and this will naturally beget a coldness, mean thoughts; evil suspicions, disregard to their commands, and such an aversion as will quickly end in downright

hatred and contempt. Moreover, it is a point of the greatest folly for either father or mother, as it too often is the case, to support the children in contempt and disrespect to the other: this ought never to be attempted; it is indiscreet and unjust; for neither parent has authority to absolve the children of their duty to the other parent. It may be that one of them is of evil fame, or bad example; yet that does not excuse the child's duty or respect, who must honour them when they cannot be loved, obeyed, or imitated by their children; because honouring parents is always in children's power; consequently, though the case may be so hard, that children shall not be able to pay obedience to the several or opposite commands of their parents; yet it can never happen so that they shall not always be able to pay respect to them both: of this they must never fail; for neither parent can be injured by our courteous behaviour. So that, if one parent should be so unreasonable to require the child to affront the other, the child would be safe in a respectful refusal; because no parent has a right to take away another's right, and each of them have equal right to the respect of their children; it must indeed be paid to both by all children; and it is a most wicked thing for either parent to command or encourage any undutiful behaviour of the children to the other parent, upon any account whatsoever. And,

If any parent, who calls himself a christian, neglects to make a *provision* for his own children, according to his understanding and abilities, he is really a bad man; he denies the faith; he withdraws himself from the obedience he owes to Christ's command, which enjoin all parents to provide for their children; and especially, when their is a necessity of sending them abroad from under their own wing, to make such provision for them, and to dispose them into such circumstances of living, as that they may both know how to spend their time innocently and usefully, and withal be as obnoxious to as few dangers and temptations as their condition will admit. And he is so much worse than an infidel, by how much he is more obliged than unbelievers are to make such provision for his children. But to determine the proportion of provi-

sion parents are to make for their children, it will be necessary to have respect to their age, capacity, and condition. Their age must be considered, because there is a time when children are so helpless, that all they want must be provided for them, and it can lie on nobody so well as parents. Provision includes every thing that children stand in need of; and as they grow in years, their condition, capacity and abilities of body and mind, are come into consideration; which call upon the parent to inure them to labour and diligence.

Parents are obliged not only to provide for their children money, lands and houses; but they must provide them with abilities of body and mind, to preserve and use the benefits they intend to bestow upon them: they must accustom them while young to application and attention to business, things necessary to the poor and rich; for without them the rich will quickly become poor, and the poor will never become rich. The poor can never discharge the duty of parents well to their children, without inuring them to labour and hardship; that is the provision they are only capable of making for them, and that is their obligation. At first it seems doing them no harm to let them continue lazy and idle; and many poor people are extremely guilty of this way of education, imagining it a piece of kindness to their children, to bring them up in such an idle life, that, when they should be able to provide for themselves by honest industry, they must rather beg their bread, than labour for it; a mistake not only mischievous to the commonwealth, but of pernicious consequence to their children: for though it please them for the present, yet it entails perpetual misery, and often untimely death, by engaging them in wicked courses, the ready road to ruin; whereas the bringing them up to labour keeps them at least in a mean sufficiency, if not in plenty, and puts them into a capacity of rubbing through many difficulties, and bettering their condition of life as Providence shall direct.

And as concerning the richer and better sort of people, let such be mindful that they never educate their children above the provision they are able to make for them; and that, whatever provision they propose to make

for them, they ought to inure them to as much diligence and industry, attention and application, as they are able to bear. Every one may be serviceable to God and his country; some one way, and some in another. Here therefore lies the great duty of those who have the care of youth, to place them in such circumstances as best agree with their natural temper and talents. It is a ridiculous thing to train up him to learning who hath an aversion for a book; or to put him to a trade, or an active life, that is made for study and retirement. The genius, and disposition, and capacity of every one is principally to be attended to, and the education to be suited to them; and then a calling to be chosen which suits with both; and no worldly considerations ought to divert us from this proceeding. Experience will quickly show that the kindness parents are forward to express, in heaping together vast estates for their children, will not be truly beneficial to them, unless they take care about their education, by using them to be diligent and industrious, to close application, and attention to what they are to be employed in. For that must be the best provision for children, which will stand them in best stead in all conditions; which will help them to rise from meanness to sufficiency, and to improve a good estate to a better, and to prevent a fall, or to bear it well, and to recover what has been lost. To be well employed, and full of honest business, is a much greater security, inasmuch as it is better to be deaf to his call, than to parley with the devil, when he is trying to draw us from our duty. He that does nothing, will quickly learn to do evil; idleness is the mother of all mischief. So the richest parents living are guilty of a notorious fault, to deal too tenderly with their children, let them leave them as well provided as they can; and it is great cruelty in parents, that are able to leave them little or nothing, to leave them pride and laziness, and incapacity both of body and mind to do themselves any service; whose effects are so remarkably bad, that it is a wonder men should need any caution to prevent it; because thereby we find the male children fall into the meanest of servitude, the refuge of the idle or uninstructed part of mankind, or betake them-

selves in despair to the wars abroad, or to robberies at home; the women fall into the hands of wicked tempters through want of ability to employ themselves in honest courses, and an incapacity of maintaining their condition, their poverty making them unfit for their equals, and their soft education making their inferiors afraid to take them in marriage.

In the next place, it is agreed on by all hands, that the children should succeed to their parents, and inherit their estate and goods; because no one hath a better right to them, when we consider the labour of the parents in acquiring them, or their affection to the children of their own body: for, since they love nobody like their children, and have a right to the fruits of their own industry, this love entitles them best to their estates when they have done with them; and therefore the civil law gives to children the estates of their parents, though they die without a will, presuming, that they, who make no declaration to the contrary, do always intend to go along with natural affection. Yet the proportion in dividing estates to children is unsettled. When a child is born, the parent sees one succeed to his labours, and seeks no further for an heir to inherit his estate: it then is natural this child should enjoy all the parents leave, and build up his family, because there is no one else to do it: but after the parent has more children, then the necessity of the eldest succeeding grows less; because there are more children to answer the same end, and to build up the name and family, as well as the eldest; and the necessity is changed into other motives. It is decency prefers the elder to the younger; because he was before him, and has done nothing to deserve being cast behind: so far it is reasonable that he should succeed to advantages; and these considerations induce an obligation on the consciences of parents, to make provision for their eldest children, by leaving them the better part of their wealth; and they feel concern when they offend against this rule, without such cause as wise and civil nations assign by their customs and laws. Therefore,

VIII. *Of Disinheriting Children.*

Some of the causes that justify parents disinheriting their children are the striking of parents; because there is so much impiety in such violence, that one cannot hear of such an action without assenting to its punishment in the utmost degree: the contriving their death by poison, or other secret method; or the having laid snares to draw them into mischief, makes a child unworthy to receive benefit from their parents: as he also was, who had been privy to any design of doing them mischief, not only to their lives, but to the hurting them in body and fortune. Other causes that justify disinheriting of children are when they are negligent of their duty to a parent fallen into frenzy, or any disability; or when, if he is taken captive abroad, or imprisoned at home, the child neglects to make provison for him, or to get him set at liberty, if it be in his power; these cases afford the parent, when he recovers his understanding and his freedom, just occasion of disinheriting such a child: for he was unnatural, and deserves no favour from him to whom he showed no love and affection. Wherefore it is fit that he should be so served, when he could have hindered his misfortune. Not that hereby it is understood that children are obliged to discharge a parent's debt, for which he has justly lost his liberty; for sometimes the children are just able to live, and have families to maintain: and if they should discharge their parent's debts, they must contract new ones; and some parents are so extravagant, that there would be no end of paying. But when children's faults are scandalous, and reflect disgrace on the parents and family; when they are extremely wicked and give no hopes of reformation, but appear irreclaimable, they may be disinherited. For vice and virtue are to be considered by laws, as right and wrong in the preserving families and tribes: and it tends to the advantage of a state, that virtue in children should have the encouragement of succeeding to their fa-

ther's estate, and the like discouragement should be given to notorious vice. Yet there is a difference to be made between an unnatural closeness, that will part with nothing to children before death, and a profuse folly, which will lay the parent at the mercy of the child; for in such a case the parent loses one of the most effectual means of keeping them virtuous and dutiful: because it is often found, that, when there is no more expectation from, there will be no more dependence on the parent: therefore it is justifiable in parents to disinherit children, whose immoralities cry aloud to heaven, reflect dishonour on the family, and exclude all hope of reformation; and by a parity of reason, if a daughter transgresses the laws of honour and virtue, she is left to the pity of her parents, and can lay claim to no provision by either divine or human laws. In all these cases we excuse the parents casting them off: their conscience reproaches them not of cruelty, or want of natural affection to their children; whose offences dispense with the parent's duty; and without these faults a parent will never be easy nor innocent in casting off the children of his own body.

And on the contrary, all parents who exercise this authority over their children without reason, and disinherit them for slight transgressions, are criminal: if their dislike is founded on no better ground than an ill shape, as if the parents fancy were to pass for judgment, and the children must be punished for what they cannot help: or on a defect of parts and abilities; not such as would suffice for the plain and honest purposes of life, but such as are to render them accomplished; which are often too near to vanity and confidence, and might be better spared: or on some personal dislike, which is really blameable; for parents never must pretend hatred or aversion to their children; the subject will not bear it, and whenever parents feel it, they ought to suspect themselves of something much amiss: or on small faults, that might be pardoned to a tolerable good servant, and should be overlooked in children. Again, children are too

often dispossessed of the father's love, and of hopes of succession, by false suggestion: they are even mistaken by the parents or accused by others. The second wife is sometimes to make way to the inheritance of her own children, by soft insinuations, to the prejudice of the children of the first marriage, or by downright accusation of them: or this ill province falls to the share of other relations, whose prospect of succeeding is not very far off. But this is most malicious and wicked; and the least that a parent can do will be to consider whose friends they are, that provoke him against the children of his own body. And parents who consume their estate in gaming, drinking, riot, luxury, and sinful pleasures, do no better discharge their duty to their children, than they who, for little or no cause, anger, folly, or humour, disinherit them. For, though it must be granted, that there is great difference between the minds and affections of these two sorts of parents; yet the effect to the children is the same, who are rendered as destitute and helpless by the one's neglect, as by the other's displeasure.

And lastly, that all others endeavours may prove effectual to the present and future happiness of children, let the parent not only recommend them to God's care, protection, and blessing, in daily and earnest prayer, but strive, by a just and virtuous discharge of his duty, to engage God's promise to shew mercy to a thousand generations of his posterity, that should love him and keep his commandments; that his seed may be blessed for ever, and not, with good Josiah, suffer the vengeance of God's wrath, and be cast out of his sight for the impiety of his forefathers. It should therefore be a parent's earnest care so to live in God's favour, as to entail a blessing on himself and his children for ever.

SUNDAY IX.

I. *Of the duty of* natural *and* spiritual brethren. II. *Of the duty of a* wife; *consisting in obedience, meekness, fidelity, and love: also of dress, and securing the affections of the husband: and* III. *Of her behaviour to an adulterous husband.* IV. *Of the duty of a* husband; *consisting in love, faithfulness, maintenance, instruction, and prayer.* V. *Of the chief consideration in* marriage; *and of unlawful marriages.* VI. *Of the duty among* friends; *as faithfulness, admonition, and constancy.* VII. *Of the qualifications requisite in friendship; and the choice of* companions. VIII. *Of the duty of* servants; *consisting in obedience, faithfulness, silence, and diligence.* IX. *Of the duty of* masters; *consisting in justice, admonition, and encouraging servants in well doing.*

I. *Of the duty of* natural *and* spiritual brethren.

THE next sort of relation in a family is that between BRETHREN; which, in the strict meaning of the word, denotes those only who are descended from the same parents, and are united in the interest of the same family, whose birth and education, and future subsistence, cannot, according to the course of nature, be expected from any other fountain than their own house. As therefore these ties are mutual, and the parent of them all should have the same unreserved and undistinguished love and regard for them all; so it is the duty of such brethren to complete their common parent's love by uniting their own hearts and affections, that the good education and careful endeavours, by which their parent strives to promote their present and future welfare, may not be in vain. And, how can brethren hope to partake of their parent's blessing, that curse each other? How can they, who

in a special manner partake of each other's substance expect to live peaceably and quietly with strangers, those that are not of their own house, and with whom in the course of the world they must have to deal; if they be already so unnatural, so unfortunate in their own disposition, as not willing, much less endeavouring to shew bowels of compassion, tenderness, and affection to those who are united to them in the next degree to their parents?

This love is not to vanish away in a strained complaisance, or courtly civility: it is not to be kept up in an outward show, with a view perchance to please the common parent, or to stifle some jealousies, or to cover some inexcusable design, in taking advantage of a sincere and undesigning brother or sister. The love of such a brother is worse than hatred, and only waits the first opportunity, like Joseph's brethren, to destroy those he pretends to love. It must be confessed from common experience, that there are few families so well united in affection, as to seclude all jars, wranglings, and debates among brethren; which too often proceed from a secret envy, when one child is preferred unadvisedly in the parent's affections: and this is for the most part the cause of all differences among brethren. But this should be so far from prompting us to break with our brother or sister, that we should rather be convinced thereby of the necessity there is for us to love them; to prevent the fatal consequences, which too frequently follow such differences, to the ruin of the whole family; and so to convince our brethren that we neither quarrel with them, nor envy them any advantage, any more than one part of the body does envy another part of the same body; which would provoke them to help forward the good of us all, as being members of the same body. And,

As you have heard the duty and interest of love among natural brethren, give me leave to put you in mind of that spiritual brotherhood which subsists among all the members of Christ's church. All chris-

tians are brethren by adoption in Christ Jesus, who has established love as the great mark of his disciples: thereby informing us, that as God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to redeem us, to make us members of his body, the church, and children of God; so the spiritual bond of religion should never fail to unite us in all love and charity, peace and concord. For,

It is not enough to say we are brethren in Christ, because we are called in one baptism to partake of the promises through Christ; but we must approve ourselves brethren indeed, by holding fast the profession of that faith once delivered unto the saints without wavering; never through vain curiosity, or unbounded passion, or for any other unlawful means whatever, breaking communion with those who believe and profess all necessary truths. And therefore, as a means to promote this christian duty, it is necessary also that we should shew forth our good conversation in Christ; and our love to his members, by communicating with them in all his holy institutions; not only continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, but also in breaking of bread and in prayer.

Such a christian temper as this will induce those, who are well grounded in the true faith, to bear with and not to despise the infirmities of such as are weak, who have been led from the truth by a too rash or mistaken judgment, or by an erroneous education. In such cases as these let no man judge his brother; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way: receive the weak in faith, but not to doubtful disputations; teaching him that which makes for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. Nor must his weakness or error ever abate our christian charity toward him; no not even if he be fallen into sin. It was the great end of Christ's preaching to call sinners to repentance; and how can we be brethren of Christ Jesus, if we do contrary to his doctrine and example? And therefore, if we see our brother commit sin, we are not to imitate the proud pharisee, boasting of our own righteousness, and re-

flect on, or almost make a merit of our brother's faults; but we must follow Christ and his apostles directions, to restore him that is overtaken in a fault, and consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted. We must admonish him, and endeavour meekly to recover him from the error of his way: remembering that we must not be presumptuous of our own strength, but to take care while we stand that we do not fall; or while we seek the conversion of others, we ourselves do not become castaways.

And lastly, we must enlarge our affections, so as to sympathize with all the faithful, whenever they, as a church or singly, for Christ's sake, are brought into tribulation. This is strongly urged by the apostle under the similitude of a natural body; where if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; so that whoever is not so touched with the afflictions of the church he is a member of, as to neglect to pray with holy David, O be favourable and gracious unto Sion; and does not pity to see her in the dust cannot be accounted a living member thereof: and whoever shuts up his bowels of compassion from any afflicted brother in Christ, at the same time disowns himself to be a disciple of Christ, who has given this as a peculiar mark of his true disciples: By this says he, all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another.

II. *Of Husbands and Wives.*

The next relation is that between Husbands and Wives. No number of people can subsist long together without observing their respective duties: none will obey, where all will command; and then mischief must be the end of all their actions. Wherefore the longer people live together, the greater is the necessity of subjection to each other: because there can be no unity, where two parties contend for superiority, or such an equality as will not yield in particular and indifferent cases.

What avails all the pomp and parade of life, which

appears abroad; if, when we shift the gaudy flattering scene, the man is unhappy, where happiness must begin, at home? Whatever ingredients of bliss providence may have poured into his cup, domestic misfortunes will render the whole composition distasteful. Fortune and happiness are two very distinct ideas; however some, who have a false idea of life, and a wrongness of thinking, may confound them. For better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith: that is, it is better to have peace without plenty, than plenty without peace. Quietness under one's own roof, and quietness in our own conscience, are two substantial blessings; whoever barters them for show and pomp will find himself a loser by the exchange. Abroad, we must more or less find tribulation; yet, as long as our home is a secure and peaceful retreat from all the disappointments and cares which we meet with in that great scene of vexation, the world, we may still be tolerably happy: but if that, which should be our main sanctuary from uneasiness, becomes our principal disquietude, how great must our uneasiness be! There cannot be a greater curse, than to have those of one's own bosom our greatest foes; when we neither can live happily with them, nor must think of living apart from them. Love is a tender plant: it must be kept alive by great delicacy, it must be fenced from all inclement blasts; or it will soon droop its head and die. Indeed, in general, we ought to be very tender as to what may affect another: otherwise we do, we know not what. For no man can tell, unless he could feel for him, how much another may suffer by any unkind thing we say or do. An angry word will give a deeper wound to some minds, than an injurious action shall to others, who are of matter too hard to make any impression upon them.

This should convince *wives*, who are going to make up a family, that there is a necessity of government, which supposes subjection in themselves, and superiority in their husbands; which is necessary to the support of rule and order, and is rightly placed in husbands rather than in wives: first, because the apostle expressly com-

mands the wife to show obedience: Wives, says he, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord: and again, because the God of nature seems to have declared their sovereignty, by blessing them with the greatest strength and abilities. Where God has made the body and the mind fittest to undergo toils and labours, necessary to the well-being of the world; the carrying on business at home, and trade abroad; the defending our country from foreign foes; and the administering of justice: where we perceive God has qualified his creatures for these offices, which are so necessary, that the world cannot subsist in peace and order without them, we may safely conclude that therein he designed to place the superior power of government. Therefore, as God hath made men necessary for these works, he hath made them superior to such as are not able to do them: and consequently superior to the woman; yet not with a tyrannical authority, nor to use them like slaves and menial servants, but as friends and companions in all the state of wedlock. Though it is granted that there are some instances of women excelling in these particulars; yet they will not overthrow the visible design of God: though there be women superior to many men in strength of body and abilities of mind, in fineness of parts, greatness of capacity, soundness of judgment, and strength of memory; yet the number of such never was great enough to show that God intended to give that sex the superiority. But the apostle limits the authority of man over the woman, and describes the manner of her subjection, and shows the cause thereof: Husbands, says he, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. And to the woman he prescribes these rules, Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve. Again, the woman's subjection is fetched from Eve being first in the transgression: she was deceived first, and then deceived her husband; she was undone by disobeying God, and he was undone by following her: she must rule no more: it was part of her curse, that her desire should be to her husband, and he should rule over her.

Yet this power and obedience of husbands and wives must have their proper bounds; the one may exercise a power that belongs not to them, and the other refuse submission where it is due. Thus it is certain that a wife owes no subjection to her husband, against the laws of either God or man; for no command of a husband will excuse a wife offending against a known law of God, or doing any thing immoral: she owes him no subjection in such matters; he is himself a rebel to their common Lord and Master, while commanding any unlawful action, and she is with him in the transgression. And in other matters their disobedience will be faulty, where they cannot make their excuse by reason and discretion, allowed custom, decency and good fame. Some may ask, Who shall be judges in such a case? I answer, Wives must not oppose their will, or their reason, to their husbands, unless they are plainly oppressed, lest they be found to contend for mastery: and if the will and reason of one be equal to the other's it is something beside that must determine who shall yield, and then we must recur to know who must obey.

Therefore the apostle exhorts the women to adorn themselves with a meek and quiet spirit; that is, not to put off their natural temper, and be immediately changed, but so to govern themselves as to be meek and quiet upon all occasions; that by reason and consideration they restrain themselves from falling into bitterness, impatience and clamour: many cross accidents will happen, and they must meet with many provocations and severe trials; and if they do not arm against them with a patient, prudent spirit, their sufferings will be doubled; they are not to be insensible or stupid under what befalls them, but to prepare that they may do nothing that misbecomes them; and herein they are to exercise their reason and best abilities. Matters are seldom mended by the noise and contention that is raised; they are oftentimes made worse, but seldom better: the folly or perverseness of men is cured, nor any unlucky accidents remedied, by fury and impatience; and those things, by indiscreet management, become too often the occasion of great mischiefs, which would otherwise have done little hurt.

Who can compare the provocations of their anger with the events and consequences, with any tolerable satisfaction? Mischief and sorrow are in the midst thereof; therefore they can find no comfort therein: the learning people get by contention is commonly too dearly paid for; they only find, that they have weakly lost what they perchance may never recover again. Yet, people, who ought to consider these things best, are so far from enquiring where and when they must obey, and in what cases they are at liberty, that they are evermore at liberty, and never in subjection at all, though in the most reasonable cases; but forget their duty and their sex together.

All wives must know that without a chaste conversation they are wives no longer: the band of wedlock is dissolved before God, and, if the husband ask the assistance of the law, it may be dissolved before man also; because this is a breach of the most solemn vow that can be thought on: wherefore, our Saviour says, though it be not lawful to put away a wife for every cause, yet in the case of fornication it may be done. This is the first mark of her fidelity, which must be always attended with a frugal management of the worldly affairs committed to her charge, so as never to apply her husband's goods and money to any other purposes than he shall approve of, and to the real benefit of his family. Which considerations should deter from such dress as serves to looseness and immodesty; because the design itself is so abominable, by heating of the fancies, and inflaming the hearts of impetuous youth, and kindling those impure desires, that will consume both body and soul. A dress put on with this design is not only blameable, but sinful. Therefore whoever dresses to make herself amiable or comely, should ask herself what she desires that grace and comeliness for, and what use she designs to make of people's admiration; and according as that is better or worse, so will her adorning herself be more or less innocent in the sight of God. Again, such a dress as takes up too much time may reasonably be deemed criminal, because our time is given for better purposes. Likewise, it should never be forgot, that such costliness of apparel

as exceeds the quality and ability of the wearer, is an offence against decency; that becoming order, which the custom of all times and places have agreed upon, as most convenient to different people from one another, and in the matter of quality, to prevent all disorders, confusion and disrespect: it unreasonably exhausts the gain and labour of the calling, when that, which should maintain the house and children, and support the trade and credit of men, is trifled off in show and gay appearance, not only to the shame, but too often to the ruin of the husband and his dependants. The very heart of industry is broken, when its fruits are squandered so lavishly away. It is a certain token of a bad wife, when she goes beyond her husband's abilities. Women call their marriage *changing their condition:* they should then remember among other senses of these words, that they change their former condition for that of their husband, be it better or worse; and that they must suit their minds to that which is the only way to thrive in that state. They must also remember that their obedience is founded upon *love.* This is the end for which woman was created, to be a *help to her husband:* so that neither health nor sickness, wealth nor poverty, nor any state of life in which the providence of God shall place him, can in any wise discharge a wife from this duty. For perfect love not only casteth out fear, but forbids all kinds of sullenness, harshness, noise, scoldings, or unquietness, and leads to and cultivates a chaste conversation; which, if it prevails, the wife has gained her point; and if not, she has the satisfaction of doing her duty, and taking the courses that were likeliest to effect what she desired; she is excusable both to God and man, and shall not fail of her reward at the last day.

So that sober married women rightly infer, that they are obliged, in common prudence, to secure the affection of their husbands, by putting on such good qualities of the mind, as will render them acceptable to wise and sober men, even when their beauty is decayed. And where men discern the fear of God and a sense of religion in their wives, and see them manage their affairs with wisdom and discretion, and discharge the duties of

every state, mother, wife, or mistress of a family, with diligence and prudence, they cannot resist such qualities as these; which give them grace and comeliness throughout, and render them most lovely in the eyes of all; and will give them grace and favour in the sight of God as well as man. From the whole it then appears, that the faults of a husband cannot excuse a wife from these duties, as well in regard to the commandment of God, as to her own and husband's welfare; for harsh or bad usage can never be supposed a proper means to reclaim a bad husband; therefore, says St. Peter, Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of their wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear: whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price: for after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands. Such behaviour as this would much conduce to the quiet of families; for it is notorious that the contentious woman often drives a peaceable and good husband from his family; which seldom fails to carry him into such places where he may contract the bad habits of gaming, drunkenness, or some worse qualifications, that may bring them to poverty, and never after be reclaimed. Yet after all,

III. *Of her behaviour to an adulterous husband.*

It is a proper question to ask, How is a woman obliged to behave herself, when she is sure her husband wanders from her bed? Or, how far is she to exercise a meek and quiet spirit on such ill usage? This has been the subject of many inquiries: and we learn both from the laws of God and man, that in such a case, where it can be proved clearly, the laws of the land will, if she pleases, release her from her bands; they will leave her at liberty.

But this liberty is not to be humorsome; if she again cohabit with her husband, she is presumed to have forgiven his sin, and his former trespass will not be a just occasion for her leaving him, when she thinks fit. This will prove her religion and discretion; for she is undoubtedly obliged to procure the conversion of her husband from his evil ways, by all the methods she possibly can; but she is not obliged to hurt herself on this account; as far as admonitions can bring him to a sense of his injurious usage, and occasion his amendment, she will do well to endeavour it. She may also engage sober people, spiritual guides, or grave relations to work his conversion, and never with secrecy and tenderness suffer sin, when she can remove it. Yet, if she be properly assured, that the man is of a churlish humour, that the very discovery of his wicked folly will harden him in his sin, or provoke him to use her cruelly, she is not in that case obliged to endeavour to reclaim him: for so long as the prudent wife takes care that her connivance or dissembled ignorance, her compliance and her silence, or her patience and submission, give no countenance to her wicked partner to prosecute his unlawful love, she is without blame; she is not obliged to make herself miserable, by endeavouring to make him good. A wife may permit what she cannot prevent, and by such permission defend herself from wrongs: she may lawfully enjoy all the advantage that living with her husband can afford her, and avoid the mischiefs that would attend a separation: in this case they have need of a meek and quiet spirit, nothing can stand them in better stead: gentle usage wins most upon hardened minds; men are sooner persuaded by silence, when it shows submission without sullenness, than by angry arguments. Superiority is claimed by man as his prerogative, which a meek and quiet spirit will yield to him, even while it disarms him: submission vanquishes without resistance, whereas one dispute begets another. Meekness, patience, and forbearance are of that natural force as to remove all matter of contention; they excite a sense of shame, and gratitude, and honour, and leave the transgressor to consider the evil he has done.

IV. *The Duty of Husbands.*

Our method now leads to recollect what that duty is, which the husbands owe to their wives. The apostle having, said, Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord; he adds, Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them: leaving it as much a duty on the husbands to love their wives, as on the wives to submit themselves to their own husbands. And indeed the husband first promises to *love* his wife, before she promises to *obey* him: and consequently as his love is the condition of her obedience, he must blame himself for her disobedience, if he has withdrawn his love. Now love of husbands to their wives is being kindly affectioned to their persons. This is what is so properly called love, that nothing beside it is thought so; and it is absolutely necessary to the making marriage easy and happy; nothing else can do it. Religion, discretion, and good qualities, birth, education, and estate, are all to be considered in their several measures and degrees, to make a married life lastingly happy: yet neither honour, nor respect, nor esteem, can make wives happy; but a tenderness of affection, which they had rather have; without which the rest are formality and insipid courtship, a sacrifice without a heart toward them: hence it comes to pass that many men are counted happy, and might indeed be so, in the good qualities and discretion of their partners, who yet are otherwise, for want of this hearty affection, which will supply many defects, and make amends for many failings; will cover many faults, and make family inconveniencies lighter. Therefore considering how much the happiness of a man depends upon his choice, he cannot answer it to God, or man, or himself, that marries where he does not, or cannot place his real affections. No law obliges a man to marry; but he is obliged to love the woman whom he has taken in marriage.

The apostle well advises the husband, that, dwelling with his wife according to knowledge, he should give honour unto her, as unto the weaker vessel: that is,

should treat her with all lenity and softness, even as vessels of a weaker contexture are to be handled with greater caution and tenderness. And indeed, whoever gives himself time to consider to what extraordinary difficulties and sufferings, God, by his order and appointment, has most unavoidably subjected and exposed the women above men, as well by their own natural frame and make, as by a great many sad, but usual accidents; will see himself obliged, in common pity, to deal gently with them, to sustain them under their infirmities, and by patience and forbearance to endeavour to make their burden lighter: and if he considers further, notwithstanding these disadvantages, of what singular use and benefit a good and prudent companion is, in all the vicissitudes of life; what solace in health, what comfort in sickness, what help in distress, what security in trouble is occasioned by her means; and above all, what labour and hardships, what watchings and disquietudes, as well as the many humble offices, she is content to bear, with all the cheerfulness and delight imaginable, in bringing up the children that are the delight of his eyes, and the strength of his old age; he that considers this, I say, instead of taking pleasure in opposing and insulting the wife of his bosom, will find himself bound in gratitude, and by the mutual pledges of their love, to nourish and cherish her, even as his own flesh.

When men will not consider the imperfections of human nature, nor remember their own mistakes, if they will take advantages, and make ill-natured reflections on the weaknesses of their partners, and make them topics of upbraidings and revilings, there will be no love and mutual kindness; for all creatures are imperfect, and stand in need of patience and forgiveness; more especially in a constant conversation. And in the management of family affairs, there will unavoidably arise occasions of disagreement: and if there be not a readiness to make the kindest construction of each other's actions, the conjugal affection will vanish away. But, when a man considers, as he ought to do, that it is his interest, as well as duty to love his partner, he will make it his choice to be a good husband; for it is the wisest thing he can do for his present ease and satisfaction.

Another duty is to prove the sincerity of his love by a strict faithfulness to the marriage-bed: for a christian marriage requires mutual fidelity, and the performance of the promise made to forsake all other persons, and to adhere closely to each other, so long as they both shall live. This is supposed in all contracts; and verbally expressed and actually engaged for in all regular marriages; and to this fidelity the men are equally obliged with the women, and in the violation of it there is both injuctice and perjury; because they break a solemn promise and do a great injury. A man, perchance, may be so far gone in favour to himself, as to think slightly of his own offences: in this case let him consider whether he would not think his mother or daughter injured, if their husbands should wander from their bed in pursuit of unhallowed pleasures; and as he judges they would resent the injustice of their husbands, let him imagine that his own wife resents his, and bears it with the same discontent. Nor would I be thought to confine these reflections to the open and notorious; for the most concealed and secret frequenting the company of lewd women, will corrupt the hearts even of those that intend to be good husbands; for the virtuous affection declines as fast as the disorderly one gains ground: it ends at best in formal cold civilities, but more commonly in hatred and aversion, in quarrels and contest, churlish or brutal usage, and sometimes in tragical events. It is a vain mistake for any husband to think he shall live easily with his partner, be her affection ever so strong to him, while he is cold to her in this particular.

Again, men should maintain their wives as becomes partners; they are friends and companions to their husbands, not slaves, nor menial servants; and are to be partners in their fortunes: for, as they partake of their troubles and afflictions, it is just that they should share of their fortunes. For when a husband falls into decay, or any sort of calamity, he involves his wife with him; they are inseparable companions in misery and misfortunes. And what can make amends for

this, but their partaking also in all their good fortune? Does not a man expressly promise this in the matrimonial contract, by which it is provided she is to have the use of things necessary, convenient, and delightful; to be as happy as his worldly condition can make her in a married state? So he is unjust, as well as unkind, if he deny it; because she bargains for it upon her part, and he engages for it upon his. Nor does this obligation cease with the death of the husband; for, if the wife survives, he must provide for her so long as she lives, according to the quality and condition they have lived in, if there be ability, and according to the custom of the place where they are. Whence note, that not only churlish men are to blame who deny their wives, while living, what is convenient; but even the best-natured men, who take no care of their support and maintenance, in case they outlive them, are properly bad husbands, who by their profuseness or idleness, by gaming and intemperance expose them to want and misery, whom they leave naked and unprovided for, at the time of age perhaps when least able to help themselves; or, it may be, incumbered with a charge of children to be maintained out of the widow's small income or handlabour. Such men in vain pretend to love and kindness, who are careless in this particular, and make not a provision for their widowhood, as they are able, but leave wives destitute and helpless; as if the sorrows of their solitary state were not sufficient to load them with trouble enough. Not that I blame those men, whose estate, calling or industry, cannot competently furnish them with maintenance: but such, who carelessly, wastefully, or otherwise, when in their power, take no care to prevent it.

Nor must it be forgot that the apostle lays it down as a duty of the husband to teach his wife what is for her eternal good and welfare, when he finds her ignorant of the means of salvation; for so much is implied in that command to the Corinthians, where St. Paul bids the wives learn of their husbands at home: which also tacitly implies, that a master of a family

should endeavour after christian knowledge, in order to perform this duty of instruction to such as are under his care.

But above all, it is the mutual duty of husband and wife to be instant in prayer to God for each other, and to strive together for their spiritual and temporal welfare; not only by exhortation to the performance of virtue, and avoiding and forsaking of vice, but by constant example in the practice of every good work, both in their family and to every other object of pity and compassion; otherwise their love cannot be accounted perfect; for that love can never be supposed to be grounded on virtue and religion, that can easily permit any one to run to their temporal or eternal ruin when in their power to prevent it. And therefore,

V. *Of Marriages.*

Those who intend to marry should not so much regard the outward shape or beauty, wealth, &c. as the spiritual qualifications of the persons to whom they desire to be joined: which will make that state of life truly holy, and to serve to the great end of the soul's salvation. Although a competency for the ease of life is to be regarded; yet a virtuous man or woman is of more value than all the wealth and honour the world can afford.

But, before we conclude, let us consider that solemn charge and declaration in the form of matrimony concerning those that, without regard to the laws of God and man, do rashly enter into that state. For whoever has betrothed themselves by promise, to any other person before, or knowingly takes such a person in marriage, committeth adultery; because in justice they belong to those to whom they had made their first promise. And whoever marries within the degress of kindred forbidden by God is guilty of incest so long as they live together. So that they are not only sins at the time, but are evil in their effects; which might be prevented, if it were duly considered,

as our church teaches, that marriage is an honourable state instituted of God in the time of man's innocency; and therefore is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes, for which matrimony was ordained; and that as many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.

SUNDAY IX. Part II.

VI. *Of Friendship.*

The next relation is between FRIENDS: of all the relations, wherein we stand to one another, there is none more strict and binding, none more necessary and beneficial than that of *friendship.* For human nature is imperfect; it has not fund enough to furnish out a *solitary life;* and the most delicious place, barred from all commerce and society, would be insupportable, and make a man run mad with his own happiness. Besides, there are so many adverse accidents attending us, that without the communion of friendship, virtue itself is not able to accomplish its ends; because the best good man, on several occasions, often wants an assistant, to direct his judgment, quicken his industry, and fortify his spirits. And when men have contracted friendship, and espoused their souls and minds to one another, there arises a new relation between them, beyond what common charity creates. For, in this close and near relation, men give each other a property in themselves, to be guides and comforts in their doubts and sorrows, monitors and remembrancers in their errors and oblivions, shelters and refuges in oppressions and calamities, and trustees to each others thoughts and deeds. How much then are they mistaken, who esteem those their friends, who

are only their companions in sin, or prompt them to offend God, defraud their neighbour, or polute themselves? Certainly if the drunkard, the covetous and flattering companion deserves the name and place of a friend; then the devil himself may claim it in a much higher degree, in the mistaken notion of friendship. Whereas a true and sincere friend will discover himself chiefly by deterring us from vice, and setting us a pious example of virtue. And therefore

True friendship will approve itself further by a faithful discharge of that trust reposed in any person. For a true friend can never be unjust in his dealings, nor betray the secrets of one that puts confidence in him. He that takes advantage of his friend's credulity or sincerity, or weakness, ought to be despised by all men. These are the treacherous wounds, from which Solomon tells us, every friend will depart. And the best way to convince any one of the sincerity of our friendship is to watch all opportunities to serve him, and be always ready to guide him with good advice; and to comfort him under anxiety of mind; to relieve him as much as in our power, in his temporal wants: and even to run some hazards, if it be possible to secure him from trouble and danger. And this must be a continued unwearied friendship: a friendship neither to be dissolved by length of time, nor broken by some slight offences. But

The most certain means of convincing any one of the sincerity of our friendship is to take all opportunities to exhort and encourage him in acts of piety, and with freedom to shew and reprove him for all sinful and unbecoming behaviour: for self-love is so rooted in our nature, and we have that partiality to ourselves, that we do not see our faults, at least not in their true light; and therefore it is necessary that some charitable hand should make us sensible of them. Moreover, all professions of friendship, without the use of such freedoms, will be apt to degenerate into flattery; and it is in vain we pretend to be willing to serve our friends, when we neglect doing them that solid good to the soul. But great regard must be had

to time and circumstances, that this practice of piety and friendship may have its desired end. The occasion ought to be weighty and important; and we should take care that our reproof be free from passion or self-interest, lest any other motive beside doing good should appear: the softest language, and the most favourable circumstances ought to concur to make it of force. Wherefore observe, that the duties of friendship are eminently concerned in putting our friend in mind when he transgresses the laws of God; by representing unto him his faults, with the aggravations and consequences that attend them; that by a seasonable warning he may be recovered to a right use of things, and be preserved from that ruin which otherwise threatens his soul and body. And we are not only obliged, by the bonds of friendship, to admonish our friend of his fault, but to take great care we do not fall into those crimes we have seen and blamed in him; this will be becoming partaker of another man's sins. For the partaking of other men's sins is, when, before any wicked action is committed, we are in any wise knowingly aiding and abetting toward the committing of it; or when, after it is committed, we are in any wise approving or justifying of it; by either of which means we partake of other men's sins, though we are not the immediate actors in them: or at least at the same time we ought to condemn ourselves, that, by exposing our own follies, we may with the better grace rectify those of others; and we ought to mix due praises with our reproofs, that the roughness of the one may be abated by the emulation that is raised by the other expedient. In case we see our friend misled, we must pray for him the more earnestly, that God would bring him to a right knowledge of his duty; and crown him with comfort in this life, and happiness in the world to come. And,

Finally, consider that nothing but breach of trust and incorrigible vice should ever break the unity of friends: and no one betrays a greater weakness and folly, than such whose fickleness and lightness of humour deprives them of the benefit of an old friend.—

A friend cannot be too old; we cannot enjoy a sincere friend too long. The very continuance of friendship, the constant experience of another's fidelity, assistance, and loving admonitions, must make it of greater value and esteem. Therefore, says Solomon, Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not: no, though perchance he offends thee in some little punctilio, or light offence. In such case reflect if you never gave him as much or more reason to cast you off, or at least consider your own infirmities, and how soon, possibly, you may give him more just reason to turn his back on you. Not that hereby I would insinuate, that we are so to bear with others under a mistaken notion of friendship, as to countenance any vice, or permit the omission of any virtue. And therefore,

VII. *Of the Choice of Friends.*

I advise that great care be taken in the choice of friends. But it may perchance be asked, What qualifications should bind this agreement? Solomon hath long since observed, that, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but that the companion of fools shall be destroyed: which denotes that, if we design any progress in virtue, we must frequent those who are eminent examples of it, and avoid those fools who make a mock at sin. And,

As in the choice of friends, so in the choice of *company*, let us fix upon such as have virtuous and christian principles, and who endeavour to shew the effects of them in their lives and conversations: for, as men of no principles are unqualified for friendship, because they have no foundation to support it; so men that acts contrary to their good principles, give but a mean proof of their sincere intentions. Men sceptically inclined may endanger the firmness of our faith, as wicked men may the strength of our virtuous inclinations. This main point being secured, and having fenced against the greatest danger of conversation, we ought to have a peculiar regard to the temper

and disposition of those we pitch upon for our constant companions: for if they have a great deal of passion, and a little share of sense, our freedom and friendship will expose us to vexatious troubles. Let us be ever so much upon our guard, a great deal of fire will sometimes heat us: we may be provoked, and then we are the worse for such companions. In the next place, it is commendable to prefer those in our esteem whose learning and wisdom, quickness and vivacity, may justly challenge a regard; for when good men of mild tempers are the masters of such abilities, they must be very agreeable companions. This nearly concerns all good christians. And young men, when they appear in the world, ought to have a particular regard to it; their future happiness depending so much on the qualifications of those they converse with. It may be they have received good principles in their education: yet they want practice to confirm the habits of virtue, and courage to resist the allurements of vice, when enticed by wicked companions. Do not we daily see that they are apt to catch at any thing that indulges and countenances their inclinations? And why? Because, when they want prudence most, they have least of it: for, if they are not by degrees entirely corrupted, yet the horror they ought to have for sin is very much abated by their seeing it frequently practised. Consequently, fire may as well be taken into a man's bosom without burning, and pitch touched without defiling, as bad company frequented and delighted in, without partaking of the bad effects thereof.

VIII. *The Duty of Servants.*

The last relation is that between MASTERS and SERVANTS. The servant must submit to, and do all his master's lawful commands; for though he owes his master no obedience against the laws of God, or the laws of his country; yet, when he enters into service, he gives up his time and labour by agreement to his master for wages, keeping, and protection, and must fulfil the conditions upon which he is admitted to serve: according to that of the apostle. Servants, be obedient to them

that are your masters according to the flesh; not with grumbling and stubbornness, but with fear and trembling; singleness of heart, and with good-will doing service; considering that it is to the Lord, and not unto men. And therefore, although a master may be churlish, and use his servants ill, they must bear with him, and submit cheerfully; because of the commandment of the Lord, who has promised, and is also able to reward them for the same. So that,

If a servant would be so unjust as to waste that time, and spare that labour, which are none of his, let him recollect that they are his master's by contract, and his master ought to have the advantage of them, because sold unto him: therefore it would be as just for a master to detain part of a servant's wages contracted for, as it is for a servant to waste or misemploy that time, and spare that labour, which were his master's by contract: for a servant has no more right to his master's money, than the master has a right to his servant's time and labour; and if the one does not stand to his bargain, he thereby sets the other at liberty on his part. Moreover, the intention of all masters in entertaining servants is to assist them in their affairs, as they cannot do all things themselves; therefore they trust others to do what is wanting: nor can they be always at home or abroad, where their business may require attendance; therefore they entertain others to supply these defects. Which end are not answered, where industry, faithfulness, and honesty are wanting on the servant's part. The absence of the master is not supplied, where the servant does not act, as the master would, if he were present: and the master stays at home to his loss, if his servant abroad be false in any shape. Nor must a servant be unjust in behalf of his master, nor impose upon the ignorance of those he deals with; he must no more recommend himself to his master's favour by overreaching others, than he must be unfaithful to those he serves. His duty is to be as useful as possible; but not to be dishonest. And as the servant's duty is to do all the good he can, and no mischief, therefore all waste and unnecessary profusion is so much damage to the master, and consequently to

be avoided; because it is so much injury done to those, who should be profited by his service. He must then in the absence of his master, behave as carefully and industriously, as he would in his presence; for to be frugal and industrious in the master's sight, and in his absence to be profuse and idle, is not only eye-service and hypocrisy, but falsehood and dishonesty. I wish servants were as much aware of this as they should be. Many think it well, if they do not directly defraud their masters of their money or substance; whereas there is little difference between a profuse waste of their masters goods or time, and defrauding them of something feloniously. Do not their masters pay for their profusion? Which, if it be unreasonable, does not want much of robbery. But of all thefts, the worst is breach of trust; as servants having given their faith to be just and honest, their villiany is greater than that of others, who though they steal more, have not bound themselves, as servants do, to be honest, and to secure their masters from others, to the best of their abilities; and this is the reason of the law, which makes it treason for a servant to kill his master.

Nothing is so necessary for a servant, as the reputation of being just and honest; and nothing is more certain to undo them than a bad fame, and the suspicion of false dealing with their masters. They have nothing to depend upon but the hopes of lying concealed, and that their thefts will never be discovered; which hopes are yet so often disappointed, that very few, who have for any time been guilty of this practice, escape being found out, which ruins their character. The reputation of servants is so valuable, that many masters will not charge them with dishonesty, though well enough assured that they are guilty: others have cause to suspect; but for prudential reasons will not accuse: and others see it, but would not irritate too far, and make their servants desperate by the publication; hoping that they will reform. Therefore, servants are deceived, if they think that all are ignorant who are silent; and that they are unsuspected, because not charged with dishonesty. This is the rule that hired servants may measure their safety by.

But indulgence and forbearance would not be discreetly used by masters with respect to servants who are so moveable and fugitive, as to be always wandering from place to place, for such ought not to be borne with a moment in their wicked devices; but they are proper enough with respect to those of a better rank, who are tied by covenants for a term of time. It may be these reasons may not be received; let such servants then consider, that, whether their wickedness be discovered or not, they are open to the eye of God; and their consciences will be always burdened by their false practices. The fruits of injustice may gratify some vain longing for the present; but when that is over, the mind is immediately disquieted at what is past, afraid of shame and discovery, and knows that the fact must be repented of, before it can be pardoned; which is much more uneasy than the denial of those desires could have been. Thus a false servant drives a bad bargain, when for so little profit he gives away the peace and quiet of his soul.

Neither let a servant when wrong presume so much upon his own good qualifications, as to answer again. This, in the apostle's interpretation, is adding to the crime of purloining; and St. Peter judges it so necessary that a servant should be patient and meek under the rebukes of a master, that he directs servants, when they suffer wrongfully, to bear it with patience, as a thing acceptable to God. But if they are punished or rebuked for a fault, it is not sufficient that they answer not again; for they must also amend their fault, as a proof of their due submission to their master's will for God's sake. And, lastly,

A servant must *diligently* attend on all the duties of his place; and avoid idleness, sloth, gaming, drunkenness, and every other irregular course that tends to the prejudice or neglect of his master's business; because a negligent servant can never be accounted either faithful or obedient to his master. Moderate labour has advantages that servants do not think on; it makes their necessary service in time grow easy: for, as repeated acts beget habits, and things habitual become easy and familiar to us; so continued labours, if done with moderation, when strength and pains are discreetly proportioned out, beget

activity, which cannot be long idle. Thus industry is truly the servant's interest as well as the master's; for such as have served with diligence are secure of better credit and more success in their future life. By this we may account why many servants when they become masters succeed ill, notwithstanding their desires of thriving; because they have not industry, and cannot take those pains that are necessary in their station. Skill and good husbandry will not do without great industry in our several ways, which will not come when called for, but must be laid up before by use; and experience teaches, that the better servants are to their masters, the better they will succeed when they manage their own affairs: and these qualifications are attained by use: when the mind is susceptible of impression, and the limbs will bend to their work, this is the time of making industry and labour easy to us. And all the care and pains they take is truly their own at the last; all the skill and understanding they get is a treasure for themselves, laid up till they have the greatest need.

The state of servitude is necessary by the appointment of the wise Creator: the world cannot be governed and maintained without it; and it is their lot to be instrumental to the public good in that state of life. Yet this is no token of God's displeasure: for he no wise forbids them to use honest means to make themselves free as soon as they can; only he commands them to behave as becomes their condition, with submission and humility, with obedience, diligence, and industry, with truth and justice, faithfulness and honesty. It is true, the state of servitude is accounted the meanest of all others: but yet it is to be made easy: servants have more of the labours of life, but they have less of the cares; their bodies are more fatigued and exercised, but their minds are less perplexed. They are only concerned in one matter, to do what lies before them, while others have a world of things to cumber their minds. Their whole care is to their masters; whereas, it may be, their masters must court and humour all they deal with. They generally have themselves alone to provide for; their masters have wives, children, and relations; scarcity or dearness af-

fects them not: if public mischiefs oppress a nation, they feel little of them, though even the government should be changed: their contribution to the support of the public is very trifling; they pay no taxes, lose no gainful employments, suffer not by the malice or insolence of parties, undergo no calumny or slander; they are less distressed, suffer less hardships, than those who live in a higher station. And though it is not possible for all men to be great, or possessed of places, nor for all men to be rich, governors and masters, or great traders, or remarkable in any faculty, yet all men may be honest, virtuous, and religious; all men may live in God's favour in this world and be happy in the other. Therefore it is a comfortable consideration for servants (however despicable their condition appears in the eyes of men) that in the sight of God, who understands the value of his creatures, they are of equal worth with the great and noble; he has given them bodies as beautiful and useful; faculties of mind as good; made them capable of being virtuous; has redeemed them with the same precious blood of Christ; opened the same gates of heaven, and prepared for them the same glory in his kingdom of everlasting bliss.

IX. *The Duty of Masters.*

Now on the other side, reason, justice, and by God's command, *masters* owe several duties to their servants; and are as much obliged to perform their part of the contract, as the servants theirs: for every relation being built on a contract, either supposed, or actually agreed upon between the parties related; each party is obliged to perform his part of the contract, upon which the relation stands: consequently, a master is faithless and unjust, who suffers his servant to be ignorant or unskilful in his profession, which he covenanted to make him understand; he breaks his covenant, by keeping back the skill that is necessary. And he that serveth is deceived, and loses the thing he bargained for, and for which he pledged his faith and service for a term of time. So to withhold the price and reward of service, which has been

bargained for, is a foul practise; the reward is the servant's due; he has already paid for it; and to defraud him of it is to rob him. And as it is injustice to deny what is the servant's due; so when servants cannot, by legal courses obtain that due, through the power of their masters, they are oppressed as well as wronged. Such masters are often met with, though in a very faulty manner: for, while the servants live with them, they commonly copy their masters vices, and among others, injustice: so living upon them, they pay themselves with interest. Again, the detaining the wages of poor men, who subsist by their daily labours, is still a greater hardship: but the injustice is the same, whether you bargain by the day or year, in detaining their hire. And it is injustice to withhold either food, raiment, or any profit that a servant has contracted for.

Nor must the master conclude that he has performed the whole of his duty, when he has justly complied with the contract agreed upon with his servant: for it is his duty also, not only to *admonish* and *reprove* his servant for any neglect or injustice discoverable in his own worldly concerns; but if he finds him deceitful, or telling lies, or otherwise offending God, he must tell him of his fault, endeavour to reclaim him, and threaten with holy David, that no deceitful person shall dwell in his house, nor he that telleth lies shall continue in his service. Besides, the law of the land has provided for the convenient and better instruction of servants of all kinds, that 'all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, shall cause their children, servants and apprentices, which have not learned their catechism, to come to the church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learned all that is there appointed for them to learn'.

Yet after all, the giving them good advice, and affording them opportunities of serving God, at home and abroad; the instructing them according to their leisure and abilities, in the rules of honesty and justice, truth and faithfulness; the exciting them to diligence and industry, and the encouraging them therein, will be very inconsiderable, and of very small force, either toward fix-

ing in the mind right principles, or forming in their manners a habit of virtuous practice: if in the private life and conversation of those, by whom families are to be directed, there appear profaneness and impiety, or lewdness and debauchery, or tyrannical oppressiveness, and violent and unreasonable passions. For, how affectionate soever the exhortations of the preachers of the gospel be, and how often soever repeated instructions be given to young persons in schools or otherwise: yet if the examples they find at home, in the practice of common life, be vicious, debauched, and altogether contrary to the precepts and admonitions given them in form, the effect of such instructions must be very inconsiderable.

Again, *moderation* should always accompany a master's commands and impositions: he must not oppress his servants, but have a merciful respect to their capacity and strength. The Lord instituted the Jewish sabbath partly, that servants might be relieved, and not consume a miserable life in continual labours, without some intermission. And though a master ought not to permit his servant to live in idleness, yet a servant is not to be consumed with toil, nor deprived of the benefit of serving God; he is not presumed to consent to such a bargain, though his time and labour are his master's property.

Other care is fit to be taken of servants, in health and sickness: by such means we are likely to make good servants, especially if we encourage them in well-doing as we ought to do, by using them with good nature and bounty, according as their faithfulness, diligence, and piety recommend them to our favour: there being none of so abject a spirit, but who will strive to make amends for kind treatment. Thus it is written, Masters, give to your servants that which is equal and just, knowing that ye have also a master in heaven; one from whom you expect the performance of those precious promises, which of his grace he hath made to you; one, from whom you look for all the benefits, temporal and spiritual, that are fit for him to give, or you to receive; and one, who hath promised to be a bounteous master to all his faithful and obedient servants, and to show mercy to such as

shew mercy to others. Which is again enforced by what our Saviour says of himself; Behold I am among you as he that serveth: and this he said, not only to give his disciples an example of humility and condescension, but to sanctify all conditions of life, and to show that God looks not with man's eyes; that he hath no respect to persons, that he regards not birth and fortune, quality and title, but that the meanest people in the world are acceptable with him, if they do his will; that it is virtue and religion which recommend men to his favour, of which servants are as capable, as those masters that are rich and mighty, and most honourable. Wherefore, as God hath made servants partakers of the same grace here, and capable of the same glory hereafter, so he commands them to be treated with mercy and compassion. Therefore we should not use servants as we do our beasts of burden: and it is one of the worst ways in the world of shewing our superiority by giving ill language and words, which no man is deserving of: and, if the truth was known, the service is not the better performed for upbraiding language. Those servants that perform their duty do it better with good words, and live more comfortably. Nor must masters be rigorous in punishments, when servants are faulty; but inflict them mercifully and upon just occasions

In fine, we vainly seek for ease and happiness in liberty, and disengagement from our relative duties; for it is evident that, as this world is ordered, it is impossible to be at ease, but by a faithful discharge of those several obligations laid upon us, by the relations we contract among ourselves. How can we possibly be happy, when we cease to be good subjects, good magistrates, good christians, good parents, good children, good brethren, good husbands and wives, good friends, good masters, and good servants? For, as we are sociable creatures we must have all the social virtues; and we cannot expect to receive any duty, while we pay none to whom it is due from us.

SUNDAY X.

I. *Of* negative *and* positive justice *to our* NEIGHBOUR; *and* first *to his* soul. II. Secondly *to his* body, *including* murder, *and the several ways of committing it; as also of* duelling; *the heinousness, punishment, and strange discoveries of murder.* III. *Of maiming, wounding, stripes, and fighting.* IV. *In what cases it is lawful to shed blood.* V. *Of* self-murder; *its infamy, causes, danger, and means to prevent it: and of melancholy persons and prisoners, that make way with themselves.* VI. *Of justice toward the* possessions *of our neighbour; and* first *concerning his wife*, secondly *his goods; and of injustice and oppression.* VII. *Of* theft; *including not paying of debts, bad securities, vexatious law-suits, protections, frauds, not discharging bonds and promises, and* breach *of* trust; *and* VIII. *Of* stealing.

I. *Of* negative *and* positive justice *to our* NEIGHBOUR;

MY duty towards my Neighbour (contained in the *sixth* and *following* COMMANDMENTS(is 'to love him, as myself; and to do unto all men, as I would they should do unto me: to hurt nobody, by word or deed; to be true and just, in all my dealings; to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: to keep my hands, from picking and stealing; and my tongue, from evil speaking, lying and slandering; to keep my body, in temperance, soberness, and chastity; not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but learn and labour truly, to get mine own living; and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.' The laws of God, relating to the life of our neighbour, are transgressed by all real mischiefs and lasting injuries whatsoever, done by one man to another, or brought by any man upon himself; and by all debaucheries, whereby men destroy them-

selves, or where into they draw others, to the ruin of the health of their bodies, and the reason of their minds: they are also transgressed, by all wilful frauds; by deliberate adulterations of things, made use of either in food or medicine; and by every thing, whereby any man receives detriment in his person. It is not, in any of these cases, a sufficient excuse, in point of religion and morality, to alledge, that the evil was not intended. Every man is answerable, not only for the evil he directly intended; but also, for the accidental ill consequences of that action, which it was his direct duty not to have performed: for, our duty to our neighbour is founded on JUSTICE and CHARITY.

JUSTICE consists in doing no wrong or injury to any man's *soul* or *body*, *possessions* or *credit*; and, in giving every man his whole due or right.

The Soul of man is an invisible substance, and therefore not to be hurt by any outward violence, to which the body is subject: yet it is capable, of many impressions; by which it is, not only hurt and wounded, but even killed; if we consider it in a natural sense.

The Soul, in the natural signification, is the heart, or mind, or spirit, of a man; which (all men know) may be broken, by sorrow and afflictions. Consequently, malicious and spiteful men, who, without cause vex and grieve their neighbour, hurt and wrong his soul, and are guilty of a breach of justice.

The Soul considered in its spiritual state, is that part of man, which must live for ever in an eternal state of glory or misery. As (under this consideration) it may be hurt, by sin in this world, and that punishment in the next, which is the consequence of sin; so that person, who tempts another to sin, is as much accessary to the hurt of his soul, as a murderer is to the death of the body he has killed. Sin is directly opposite to that grace, by which alone the soul is enabled to live for ever in the sight of God; and so becomes the disease and wound thereof. The Soul is wounded directly, by every one, who commands any under his authority, to do an unlawful action; or adviseth another to do a wicked thing; or enticeth

others, either by pleasure or profit, to commit any wickedness; and this crime is much enhanced; when men help either to contrive, or to put their wicked devices in execution. The soul is also wounded indirectly, by giving a bad example; especially by those, who carry authority in their station of life; for, many are so void of grace, as to copy other men's vices, as they do their dress, for fashion sake: again, by not shewing a dislike, to what we hear or see done in defiance of God and his laws, and thirdly, by justifying and defending any evil or sinful act, in themselves or others: and, finally, by making a mock at sin, and contemptuously deriding the faith of Christ, through which alone we are to be saved.

As these are the means, by which men commonly injure the Soul of their neighbour, by drawing him into intemperance, luxury, drunkenness, or uncleanness, and many other vices; it behoves every one to examine himself, how often and how many he has hurt by any of these particulars. It is not sufficient, to say, I have wronged no man by maiming his body, by stealing his goods, or undermining his character: whomsoever we draw to sin, we have endeavoured to bring to eternal punishment: this is (as it were) secretly killing the soul, under the pretence of friendship; and is as much worse, than the murder of the body, as the soul is preferable to the body, and eternal misery is more to be dreaded than death. But, such a murderer cannot hope to escape unpunished, at the last day: for Christ declares, that whosoever (by tempting, enticing or encouraging any to sin) shall offend any of these little ones which believe in me; it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Whoever is thus accessary to another's sin becomes also subject to, and has reason to expect the same punishment; unless he begin early, to judge and bewail himself for all these things, wherein he has wronged his neighbour; and firmly resolve, never to cast a stumbling block in his way for the future. If it be possible, he must also endeavour all he can,

by admonition and good example, to reform him he had caused to sin.

II. *Of Negative Justice to the body.*

Now let us consider *Negative* Justice, in regard to the *bodies* of men. This forbids us to do wrong and violence; the highest degree of which is killing the body, and is the sin forbidden in the *sixth* COMMANDMENT, *Thou shalt do no murder:* that is, Thou shalt neither by open violence, in defiance of the laws of God and man, nor secretly or treacherously, by the means of another's sword; nor by false accusation; nor by poison, nor by any other private means whatever, take away the life of thy neighbour; which are too often suggested by an old grudging, or covetous, or ambitious heart to satisfy a malicious passion, or to make way to some profit or preferment: as it is too often become the practice of loose women, who kill their own infants to hide their own shame. Besides, they who entice others to drinking, or other excesses, which bring on diseases, and, by weakening the body, not only deprive them of health, the most valuable comfort of life, but thereby hasten the time of death, cannot hope to be clear from their blood in the sight of God. And again; whoever excites or prompts another to such a pitch of anger and revenge, or promotes dissention between others, he certainly cannot be guiltless, but must expect part of the punishment, if it ends in murder.

Duels, or fighting in private quarrels, are often breaches of this commandment; because disallowed by divine authority; and therefore the guilt of murder is chargeable upon the persons engaging in them. For the plea of self preservation is utterly foreign to the conditions and circumstances of him who formally gives or accepts a challenge. And he adds to the sin of making an outrageous attempt upon his neighbour's life, by throwing himself unnecessarily into the utmost danger of losing not only his own life, but his soul also. For those, who die in such engagements,

go into the other world, not only void of charity, but glowing with wrath and fury; and when these qualities have the last possession of their souls, what society of spirits can that be which their souls are qualified for in the next world? And, provided they do not perish in the conflict, is it worth a man's while to run the hazard of suffering eternal misery, for the sake of redressing an injury, or resenting an affront? Consequently, all arguments of human invention, to countenance such a wickedness, must be evasive and deluding; and to fear men more than God is the most dishonourable misapplication and degeneracy of fear. There is nothing which religion does more severely forbid than this revenging of injuries in a private way; nor is there any thing more strictly enjoined than forbearance and forgiveness; even so strictly, that we cannot, without hypocrisy, say our daily prayers, unless we be in charity with all the world. Therefore, whoever engages in duels through fear of suffering little calumnies and reproaches, which, in the judgment of the wisest men, are not really such, does at once forfeit all just pretentions to true courage, honour, and generosity of mind, and all claim and title to eternal life. Moreover,

This precept extends, according to the interpretation of Christ and his apostles, to our *words* and secret *intentions*. Our blessed Lord expressly applies it to the several degrees of causeless anger, breaking forth into contumelious and reproachful language; and, in St. John's account, Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that a murderer hath no eternal life abiding in him. Because such as have not sufficient degrees of natural courage, or want opportunities actually to defile their hands with blood, may yet sacrifice their neighbour in their secret thoughts, and indulge their imagination in the view of those mortal wounds which they dare not give; and men, who are afraid to handle the instruments of death, may shoot out their arrows, even *bitter words*, and pierce the souls of their brethren with the expressions of cruelty, despitefulness, and scorn. But they

may justly fear that the blood thus shed in fancy and conception only shall be laid to their charge, and that the rewards of the false or cruel tongue shall be, as of the iniquity itself, mighty and sharp arrows with hot burning coals. For whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

If the guilt of this transgression be taken from the indignity offered unto God, or from the injury done to man, or from the punishments expressly denounced against it, or from the anguish or horror which it is apt to leave upon the mind, we should find reason to assign it a place among the loudest of crying sins; for the first instance of murder was followed close by perplexity, oppression and despair. My punishment is greater than I can bear; or rather, mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven me, says Cain, who slew his brother: and it follows, Every one that findeth me shall slay me: the whole creation must be alarmed, and stand ready to execute vengeance on me. And that weight of confusion, which natural conscience scarce ever fails laying upon such sinners, must be increased by the expression of God's indignation. The Lord abhors the bloodthirsty; has expressly forbid the showing any mercy or compassion to a murderer; and will accept of no satisfaction for his life: for, as he has declared by Moses, If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, and slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die: and when the sentence of death is pronounced upon him this reason is subjoined. For in the image of God made he man. Besides, there are special aggravations in the injury done to man, as well as the indignity hereby offered to God: other injuries may be repaired, or admit of some satisfaction: but this is utterly irreparable: other injuries may rob a man of his estate or reputation, or of some particular advantages; but this is the summary of mischief, and deprives him once for all of every temporal satisfaction

whatever. And this injury may prove fatal to the sufferer's soul, as well as his body, and at once consign him to the first and second death, by depriving him of that space to repent, which may be necessary, and might have been sufficient to the accomplishment of his salvation: or, if the injury should not fall upon him under a state of impenitence, and press him down into everlasting destruction, yet must the weight of it, even in relation to this view of that eternal state, fall heavily upon him. Who can bear the thoughts of being thrown headlong into the other world, instead of moving thither through the common course of nature and providence? Even the best of men would be glad of a few minutes at the last to review and mourn over their miscarriages and defects; for a little space of time, in the conclusion of their lives, to prepare them for their appearance before the glorious and unspotted presence of God: and if these advantages be so desirable, how grating must that injury be, which deprives men of them?

Shall they then escape God's justice, who thus dare to wrest, as it were, the power of life and death out of the hand of God? You have read the punishment of Cain; and let the dreadful death of Jezebel and Ahab, which God sent upon them for the murder of innocent Naboth, deter every one from this worst of sins. I could instance the vengeance of God upon other murderers who perished miserably; as Absalom, for the death of his brother Amnon; and Rechab and Baanah, who themselves were put to death, by the very person they thought to please by the murder of Ishbosheth: but it would be needless to multiply examples from sacred history, or ancient times, when every age produces sufficient evidence, that no murderer can escape the just wrath of God. By the law of nature therefore, this crime was always judged worthy of the severest punishment: the very barbarians reasoning among themselves, that a murderer, whatever escapes he may make, yet vengeance sufferth not to live. By the laws of all civilized nations in the world, it has always been punished capitally; and

sometimes with the most cruel kinds of death. By the law of Moses, God commanded that no satisfaction should be taken for the life of a murderer, but the guilty person (as you have heard before) was to be taken even from God's altar, that he might die.

God hath armed every sensitive part of the creation against this wickedness: for a man's own conscience, which must be privy to the sin, from that time not only racks him, and becomes a punishment to him worse than death; but it frequently compels him to confess the crime; that justice may be executed on his body, and too often drives him into the murder of himself; nay, the very brute creatures have frequently detected this unpardonable barbarity. They therefore that duly consider this sin with its punishments should guard themselves from all the ways of committing it; for if we give way to passion, there is no security that it will not end in murder: anger being a madness which deprives us of our reason; so that we cannot tell what we do, when influenced thereby: if malice gets us into its power; or, if covetousness, ambition, lust, or any other sinful desire gets dominion over us, they will not stick at murder to serve their wicked purposes. Again, as intemperance will cut off the life of man, we must not only not entice a man to drunkenness, nor keep him company, but we must ourselves refrain from that vice; because our example may draw others to do the same. And finally, not to mention the many other cautions against this sin of murder, which are easily to be inferred from some of these heads, let us take care neither to encourage nor contribute to that contention which may take away life; and so shall our hands be innocent from blood that is shed against the commandment of God.

III. *Of Maiming and Wounding.*

Neither may we dismember, maim, or deface our neighbour's person; which sins, wilfully committed, if they are not a direct and effectual breach of the command, are at least a partial violation of it. The judgment of God has abundantly declared the guilt of such practices,

wherein one of the slightest instances of these crimes, even in the case of a bond-servant, the master's cruelty of striking out a tooth, was the servant's discharge from his servitude. Besides, these outrages have a natural tendency to the death of the party, which frequently follows; or disable the sufferer from getting his bread, which in the event may prove a more lingering and tormenting death. And if we are accountable for the consequences of our actions to God, why not to our fellow-creatures?

Does not every one dread the loss of a limb, and would we not do and suffer any thing, and part with any of our worldly goods, to preserve it in time of danger? And then, is that doing as we would be done by, if we attempt that to another which is so intolerable to ourselves? But the evil is highly aggravated where the injured person happens to be poor, who must labour for his living, and perchance is the only support of a poor family; for he then that deprives him of his limbs, by which he maintained himself, is a man of blood; for he that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him. What satisfaction then can be made in such a case? It is certain that we cannot restore the limb; but we must keep him, if able; and if not, we must relieve and support him by our own extraordinary labour; for whatever new afflictions, or whatever sin this brings him into, we must answer for them before the judgment-seat of Christ.

This commandment (by just interpretation) may be extended, to all kinds of injury done the body of our neighbours; such, as Wounds and Stripes. If we be commanded to be merciful, to the beasts that perish; much more is this cruelty and unmercifulness to our fellow creatures, forbidden. We must do justice to every man, in public and in private: *we must do to others as we would they should do to us;* not what other people actually do to us, but what we would they should do unto us. If we go no farther, than the act of retaliation, as the common practice is; and justify ourselves in this manner; 'Such a man refused to do me a kind office, when it was in his power; and why should I serve him? He treated me with rigour and severity, when he had oppor-

tunity; and why should I not treat him in like manner?' This is not doing as we would be done by; it is the language of passion, not of reason, or a mind filled with the grace of God. Can we be justified, in doing what we condemn in another? Can the same thing be a fault in another, and a virtue in us? By the law of nature, we are allowed to defend ourselves, but never to take vengeance: and christianity teaches us, not to measure our own, by the behaviour of other men. Nothing, but excessive pride and contempt of others, can ever induce a man to wound one of the same nature with himself, who cannot (without the utmost discontent) bear the least reproachful word. But what excuse can those persons plead, who take pleasure in the cruelties they exercise on their poor neighbours, upon vain pretences, and without any mercy; or those inhuman tempers, who set others a fighting, and take pleasure therein?

The case of Abraham, in designing and attempting to sacrifice his son, does not fall under any of these reasons or observations, but depends upon circumstances, which were peculiar to his own person, and such as never were, nor ever can be drawn out into a precedent, or with any colour of reason be assigned as a vindication of any private person, who shall make an attempt upon his neighbour's life: he was called to this by a revelation from God, and therefore must not be pretended to be imitated hy any one, who cannot bring an undoubted proof of the same authority. Wherefore, every private person, who without a revelation from heaven, and not ignorantly or accidentally, but knowingly and designedly, and all that without any necessity arising from the imminent, or otherwise unavoidable danger to his own destruction, does take away, or invade his neighbour's life, by open assault, or secret contrivance, in person or by agreement with any other, by command or persuasion, consent or consultation, suggestions or insinuations, bearing false witness, or hiring others so to do, or by any other means but what has been already mentioned above, is chargeable with the guilt and sin of murder.

IV. *Of Self-murder.*

Yet as there is no law but will admit of mitigation; so both passion and reason have endeavoured to find an exception to this commandment: the former is striving to quiet a reproving conscience by various pretences and false colours; the other clearly explaining the true intention of God's precept, showing in what case it is lawful to take away a man's life. We may lawfully take away a man's life in the case of self-preservation: this is so certain and obvious, that it can scarcely admit of any mistake, when the danger is manifest that we must unavoidably either give or receive the fatal stroke. We may lawfully kill a man in battle, if we are satisfied that such a war is undertaken by a state or kingdom to support and maintain its just rights, or even sometimes to preserve itself or its allies from utter ruin. It is needless to prove that magistrates are invested with a just authority to inflict capital punishments upon offenders, or that it is just to cut off the corrupt members of the body politic as well as natural, for the preservation and benefit of the whole. The innocence of that person is unquestionable, who, through pure ignorance, or unforeseen and unavoidable accident, deprives another of his life; for an action, which has no foundation in the will, is not properly criminal, and the nature of every action, with regard to good and evil, is determined by the intention: so that, where there is no intention of doing the action, there can be no morality or immorality in that action: therefore under the Mosaical dispensation, a sanctuary was, by divine appointment, provided for every one, who was so innocently unfortunate as to kill his neighbour ignorantly and at unawares; lest the avenger of blood should pursue and slay him, before his innocence should be sufficiently cleared up. These are the cases wherein the lives of men may be taken away without sin. And for the sake of distinguishing these cases it is, that the words of the commandment are thus rendered, *Thou shalt do no murder*. Murder therefore is the killing of a man, not by misfortune, but with design; not for our own defence

and preservation in necessity, but out of malice and hatred toward our neighbour; not as destroying a public enemy, but one with whom we ought to have lived under the natural ties of friendship and humanity, or at least of mutual forgiveness: not as bringing a malefactor to execution for the preservation of the commonwealth, but as cutting off an innocent member to the hurt and loss of public society.

SUNDAY X. Part II.

V. *Of Self-murder.*

What has hitherto been said concerning the killing of another, must in proportion be understood likewise concerning *self-murder*. For no man has a right to anticipate the call of God, or to bereave the public of a member, by destroying himself. Every person who knowingly and wilfully destroys his own life, is guilty of murder; for God only, who gave us our life, has a right to take it away; and by consequence every man, who offers violence to his own life, doth manifestly invade the prerogative and usurp the right and authority of God. It is true, there are many examples among the heathens, who fell by their own hands, upon some pressing extremities; yet their rules, laws, and reasonings, forbid such practices. Examples against rules are of no authority. Men of loose principles, have always had false notions of liberty, honour, and courage. And though we live in an age, when every extravagant and wicked thing is justified by some wretch or other; yet we should be loth to have posterity believe that this was the general sense and judgment of our age.

Let us then consult the wise; the laws, the rules, and reasonings of the grave and governing part; and from them we shall learn, that self-murder was an abhorred practice; that whatever pretence is made to honour and courage, it was but cowardice, fear, and a mark of a poor spirit, that sunk under the common calamities of nature: a practice to be abhorred and condemned with all our zeal, to be guarded against with all our care, reason and

religion; walking in the ways of God, and pouring out our prayers for his preventing and assisting grace, that his fear may ever be before us, and the temptations to such impiety may never overcome us. And considering the love of ourselves, the inhumanity of the crime, and the dangers run by those who are guilty of self-murder, it is surprising how any person can resolve upon such a desperate self-condemning action; especially as they who murder themselves know and confess they are tried by the sixth commandment not to commit murder; the letter and sense of the commandment will reach not only his neighbour, but himself also. Though a man was weary of life, and sought for death; as people in pain for ease; and wearied with labour for rest; yet would it be unlawful to give him the satisfaction he desired, by killing him, because it would be murdering that single man; and because of the mischiefs which such a death brings upon his family. Whence we ought to remark, that murder does not barely consist in the violence that is offered to one against his will; but in taking away a life, which he has no right to take away, by laws human or divine: and as a man has no right himself, therefore he can convey no right to another, to take away his own life. But yet observation proves, that when men engage in wicked practices, and find they are brought to shame or danger, their minds are not equal to their burden; so that they can bear the guilt, though not the shame: this confounds and oppresses. But

Those, who have not the fear of God, nor their own salvation before their eyes, should consider what sorrow and confusion are unavoidably occasioned to the nearest friends they have in the world, by parting from them in such a manner. Neither poverty, nor bodily afflictions are so hard to bear, as the shame, reproach, or infamy, or even the apprehensions of such a woeful death. And will you entail on your kindred and family the reproaches and ill-usage of an insulting and uncharitable world, with perplexing doubts and fears concerning your condition in the other life? What ingratitude is this to do mischief and dishonour to those you love: these considerations have hitherto had their weight with heathens; and

shall christians break through all considerations of their own honour, interest, and duty, and not be content to live, till they can die without doing wrong or mischief to their friends? A true christian believes, that the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness; that, without repentance, sins cannot be forgiven: and that after death there is no repentance. That such a man as this, professing the faith of Christ crucified, and covenanting with God in baptism to take up the cross, and bear it, if need be, to death, should, in the impatience of his soul, pressed by some calamity, deliberately choose to throw his burden off, by committing a sin of which he knows he can never repent, and venture the dreadful consequence to everlasting ages; is what nobody could ever reason themselves into the belief of, if the frequent practice of unhappy people did not convince us it may be perpetrated. Therefore it may be an useful caution to have our minds prepared, and affections subdued; that we may not be destitute of succour from reason, or give ourselves up to the guidance of present passion.

This is the lot of those who fall into the desperate resolutions we are treating of: their pssions are highly indulged and yielded to; so that, when grievous accidents befall them, they know not where they are, nor whither to turn; they can bear no loss, nor fall from the condition in which they were, but abandon themselves to despair of God's help and mercy. They place their whole happiness in possessing of riches, enjoying honours, and in the praise of men; and when riches take to themselves wings, and fly away, when they fall from their honours and dignities, they know not how to breathe in any other air, nor to want the courtships and respects that were wont to be paid, not to their persons, but to their power and interest. So when they sink in their reputation, they are dejected to the lowest ebb; are afraid that every eye views them with contempt, and that every tongue is reproaching them. But

Can this be a sufficient plea for self-murder? No; the miseries men endure will end in death at last, which may come quickly; and the sins that brought them to that misery will be forgiven upon repentance, be they never

so great and many: but the course they pitch upon to relieve themselves is a sin that admits of no repentance, and consigns them to eternal pains and sorrows, the punishment of murder in general; for they expose themselves in a particular manner to the greater condemnation, by some particular sentiments and dispositions, which are commonly the root and foundation of this unnatural sin. And it is the same thing whether we consume ourselves by a slow lingering poison, or dispatch ourselves by an immediate death: we are equally guilty of self-murder, whether we knowingly wear away the springs of life gradually, which is the case, when we abandon ourselves to wasting grief, or we cut at once the thread of it violently asunder. Do not those men, who destroy themselves to avoid present sufferings, resolve that God shall not dispose of them as he pleaseth; but that they will wrest their lives out of his hands, and not suffer him to prolong or continue them beyond the limits of their own will? If this be their language, as by their actions it must be, what can be expected, but that God should execute the fiercest of his vengeance upon their disobedience? If pride, and envy, and ambition, have so much power over their minds, that they will violently remove themselves out of the world, because they are not advanced to a more advantageous situation in it; what can they reasonably expect or imagine, but that they should feel Solomon's observation, in the most extensive sense of it, That pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall; And what foundation can there be of hope, that God will forgive a flagrant sin without the sinner's repentance for the same? Or is it to be conceived, that a man should repent of a sin in the commission of which he ends his life? These are some of the many reasons against self-murder. Yet,

When men come into these perilous hours, they are generally deaf to all reason, and listen only to the suggestions of their passions; and if they be not prepared beforehand to withstand such assaults, they seldom do it when the danger approaches. Wherefore, it is more in men's power to be innocent, and out of difficulties and straits, than, being involved, to deliver themselves from

the distracted counsels and suggestions of their despairing minds; although they be such as all men would have startled at and abhorred, when free of such distractions: and I must add, a man overwhelmed with misery is not inclined to ask, or capable of taking counsel when offered. Therefore, how much safer is it to secure men from such principles as occasion these perplexing thoughts, than retrieve them from the power and influence of them? Let them consider, that God is the best of beings; and that a being absolutely and necessarily good can never intend any thing unmerciful or cruel: for it is observable, that few attempts of this kind are made, till religion is mastered, and its impressions effaced; or men are so misguided as to think these mischiefs may be done, and religion be safe. But

Those unhappy people, who lie under the dreadful apprehensions of God's anger, accounting themselves vessels of wrath, and fitted for destruction, and not being able to live under the torment of that thought, to put an end to their miserable lives, are most to be pitied while alive, and spared when dead: since nothing can look so like distraction, as that distemperature of brain which makes them act so strangely. With such I would thus expostulate: If they are vessels of wrath is this the way to ease them? If they believe themselves consigned to misery in the other world, what do they get by throwing themselves into a place of torment before the time appointed? This is to die for fear of death; and indeed a great deal more disasterous.

And so, let me conclude with a word of advice to condemned criminals, who sometimes attempt to prevent their legal punishment by dispatching themselves. Do they think that they save themselves the shame of dying publicly? Vain imagination! What can these wretches propose by falling into the hands of the living God sooner than they need to do, if they lived as long as God would let them live? but what can more resemble madness, than to believe that Christ died for such as repent, and believe the gospel; and yet to distrust he died for me, who am so

sorry for my sins, that I would give the world (if it were mine) I never had offended God, willing rather to lose all the world, than commit the like any more, and to purchase the favour of God with my blood, rather than that his displeasure should rise against me? Let them who can say, this is not repenting and believing, say what is so; and yet this is the case of many unhappy souls. And what can be liker to distraction, than to believe and repent, to sorrow and amend; and yet conclude ourselves vessels of wrath under God's vengeance?

VI. *Of Adultery.*

I have already show how far, and by what means any one injures his neighbour in his soul and body; now, in the next place, I shall declare in what manner a man may be wronged in his *possessions*; of which his *wife* may properly be said to be the chief: and therefore I shall proceed to shew the heinousness of a breach of the *seventh* COMMANDMENT, where it is said, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* Because

This act of injustice of enticing a man's wife from her husband's bed is doing wrong not only to the man, but to his wife also; forasmuch as she is thereby robbed of her innocency, and deluded into the high road of eternal perdition, by bringing her into the guilt of both lust and perjury: and, not to mention the discredit, which such a blemish throws upon her character, it most certainly chills her proper affections toward her own husband, and that seldom fails to end in loathings, disgusts, and a multitude of other evils, which of all others make the marriage state the most miserable. And,

What greater injustice can be done to the husband, than to rob him of the love and faithfulness which is due to him from the wife of his bosom, and overwhelming him (if it be found out) with the most anxious pains of jealousy? Besides, the world is so unjust, as even to add to his sorrow, by reproaching the injured man with scorn and contempt, only be-

cause he is injured. And it cannot be called less than theft and robbery, should the injured husband be burdened with the providing for a spurious offspring of his wife's adulterous practices; for such a child would take from the legitimate: and therefore it cannot ever be satisfied without a restoration to the defrauded family of as much as such a provision has taken from it. And here it would be proper to remark, that under the Jewish law, the adulterous were to be stoned to death; because it is presumed, that no man can ever make a sufficient satisfaction for so great an injury to the soul and body of his neighbour. Other ill consequences of this vice are, that it propagates sickness and infirmities, both upon men themselves and their posterities; that it is destructive of human society, and of the public welfare; that it separates the nearest relations; lays the ground of inextricable confusions, and implacable dissentions in families: and oftentimes occasions public contentions, murders, and seditions: so that hardly from any other cause have issued greater and more tragical events. And this should warn those who continue now in this crime, that they repent: for though the Jewish laws is abrogated, yet God's justice is still the same: his knowledge penetrates the most secret parts, and will he call men unto judgment, and punish them with death eternal for unrepented adulteries, which must be lamented with a whole life of penetential exercises.

Secondly, we must not injure our neighbour in his *goods*; that is to say, in none of his possessions, whether houses, land, money, cattle, or any thing that is his property and right, by endeavouring to hurt or damage, or to defraud, or in any wise get any of them for our own use; which includes both malice and covetousness.

The *malice* of this injustice appears, where no interest or profit can follow to the person who takes pleasure to hurt, damage, or destroy the goods of a neighbour whom he hates: an action, which most nearly resembles the continual practice of the devil, to undo others without doing himself any good; but

much exceeding him in wickedness, forasmuch as he only envies creatures of another nature, whereas the malicious man persecutes those of his own nature.—And

Its *covetousness* is most notorious, which will be better understood when considered under the distinct heads of oppression, theft, and deceit. For

Oppression is an open violence, and force against our neighbour's goods, and a sin condemned by all; and even those that practice it in some of its very criminal branches, where the halter is not about their necks, will cry aloud against it. For no state or condition of men are secure from it. Many rich, honourable and powerful, both nations, princes and subjects, have been deprived of their rights, liberties, and estates, by violence; and gifts, bribes, grandeur and authority have too often corrupted or overawed a judge and taken place of justice; in which case, all persons concerned, as well the lawyer that pleads, as he that gives sentence, are guilty of oppression. Again, whoever takes advantage of a poor man's needs, and extorts too great a usury from him, under a pretence to supply his pressing necessities; or a griping landlord, who puts his tenants on the rack; or those that are in any wise intrusted with assessing, taxing, and rating their neighbours, and not only to do it without justice and mercy, but too frequently lay hold of such opportunities to gratify some private pique or resentment; these, or any other extortioners, exercise but different branches of the sin of oppression. But

Let them remember the danger they risk; for the Lord has declared by the mouth of his prophet, that He who hath oppressed the poor, and hath spoiled by violence, shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. Therefore take the advice of Solomon, who exhorts us not to rob the poor, because he is poor, neither to oppress the afflicted in the gate. For the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

VII. *Of defrauding Creditors.*

The *second* sort of this injustice is *theft;* which is an unlawful taking, using, or keeping our neighbour's property, either by force or fraud. The extent of this sin is wide and deep, and discovers itself in defrauding our creditors, or withholding what is our duty to pay or return, and in taking from our neighbour what he already possesses; so that all debts, stealing, deceit, or breach of trust, and deceit in traffic, are to be considered as parts of theft. For

He who lends to one man, and gives him credit for money or commodities, or accepts of security for what he lends to another, acquires a right to be justly repaid according to the contract: the debtor hath only right to use what he borrows for his present convenience or necessity: but the property remains in the hands of the creditor, who hath the same right to it, as when it was in his own custody. This obliges us to borrow no more than we have a fair prospect of repaying; unless he that credits us knows our inability, and is willing to run the hazard of the loss. Because whoever engages himself in debt, beyond what he can reasonably hope to repay, takes that from his creditor upon promise of payment, which he knows he is never likely to restore him; which is, at least, as high an injustice, as if he had taken it by force or on the highway. What shall we then say of those, who refuse and deny it, or take indirect courses either to abate, or avoid the payment of their lawful debts? This is not only to deprive a creditor of the present use and possession of his money, but also of his property.

The same is to be said of borrowing upon false or insufficient securities, such as bad mortgages, counterfeit pawns, or insolvent bondsmen; for he who takes up his neighbour's goods or money upon such securities, as he knows are incapable of repaying him, doth as manifestly wrong him, as if he had taken them by stealth or violence. Whence, as our debts are our creditors rights, if we would be just debtors, we must

neither reckon what we owe to be our own, nor so dispose of it, as to put it out of our power to restore it to the true proprietors; for in so doing we rob and injure our creditor. And

They ought to be no less careful to repay it upon the due demand, or according to contract. Because as it is unjust to deprive a creditor of his money, so it is unjust to deprive him of the use and possession of it, any longer than he consents and agrees to it; wherefore, such debtors as put off their payments without their creditors consent, when it is in their power to discharge them, or put them upon fruitless attendances, and make advantages of their money against their consent, and beyond their contracts and agreements, fall into a degree of injustice, next to that of robbing and despoiling them of it: consequently, by an indispensable rule of justice, every debtor is obliged rather to strip himself of all, and cast himself on the providence of God, than by denying his debts, or indirectly shifting the payment of them, to feather his nest with the spoil of his neighbour's property.

Therefore, when, by refusing to pay what we owe, we force our creditors upon costly or troublesome suits to recover their own; or by pleading protections, or sheltering ourselves in a prison, we avoid being forced to it by law; or, by fraudulent breakings, we necessitate them to compound our debts, and accept a part for the whole; whichsoever of these ways we take, I say, to deprive our creditors of their rights, we are inexcusably dishonest. It may be, that by these or such like knavish evasions we may force them to acquit and discharge us; yet we cannot force God, in whose book of accounts our debts are recorded as well as in theirs: and it concerns us sadly to consider, that there is nothing can cancel them there, but only a full restitution; and that, if they are not cancelled there, all the tricks and evasions in the world will never be able to secure us from a dismal reckoning, and a more dismal execution at the bar of divine justice.

The same justice, which obliges men to what has been already said concerning debts of their own con-

tracting, calls upon every one to discharge those debts also, which either through friendship for their debtor, or on any other account, they have made their own by being bound for another, who is either incapable, or unjust enough to refuse payment. It is true, the case is hard with the bondsman to pay for what, as we commonly say, he has neither ate nor drank for, and in likelihood will detriment his family, and perhaps bring him to the very brink of poverty; but suppose the worst, he cannot blame the creditor for these consequences, whose right to his money cannot be superceded by any act the debtor can do, or any thing the bondsman can suffer, till the value received is duly and honestly restored. So that such misfortunes are severe cautions for us never to enter into such engagements rashly, or without good grounds of security to ourselves; but no countenance for breaking them, on which the creditor placed his chiefest confidence: and therefore he must either be paid by that means, or he is cheated and betrayed. But,

Of all debts, those of a man's own voluntary promise admit of the least excuse for non-payment, or wilful withholding of them. Does not David in his description of a just man command us, as it were, to pay those promised debts, though they had been made to our own disadvantage? And as they include the wages of servants, and the hire of the labourer; so whoever delays to discharge them must remember the express command of God: Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.

Likewise, where any of these offences are committed in breach of trust which is the case of servants, and any others who are intrusted with other men's affairs: however the law may in such cases alleviate the punishment yet in conscience this is an aggravation and increase of the guilt, as being a breach both of jus-

tice and fidelity. Nor is it any diminution of the crime, when it is the public that is wronged by any unjust act: for though it is not so obviously and immediately apparent upon whom the injury falls, as in the case of private wrongs; yet the uncertainty, or the number of the persons among whom the damage may chance to be divided, alters not the nature of the crime itself. And though injuries of this kind, in smaller instances, are not perhaps, immediately felt and complained of; yet, when the public comes to be wronged by persons of large and extensive power, then not only the crime itself, but the effects of it also, become greater and more apparent, than in the case of private injustice.

VIII. *Of Stealing.*

When a man takes from another what is already in his possession, then *theft* is called *stealing*: under which head we properly reduce those most notorious rogues that rob upon the highway, and those that forcibly break in houses and carry off their neighbours goods or chattles; or also those little pilfering thieves, whose fingers cleave to every little thing they see in private: against both whom, in England, the law has enacted the punishment of death, which few ever escape that make a constant practice of this injustice; and nothing but timely and sincere repentance can secure them from the eternal punishment of God's justice. So dear is the price of their iniquity, as to venture not only their neck, but to barter their soul likewise for every little trifle they steal from another, or buy, or receive, knowing it to be stolen; which many, who seem to abhor stealing, are guilty of, in buying such things a little cheaper, than at common price. Nor must we conceal our neighbour's goods; for if we find a thing, and know its right owner, and keep it for our own use, we cheat him, and thereby are guilty of theft.—The only caution here needful to be given is, that young persons especially take heed of the beginning of this sin, of being tempted to do wrong in smaller

matters, in things that may seem at first of no great consequence, not very highly injurious to the person wronged, nor very shocking to the conscience of him that does the injustice. But this is of all others the greatest and most dangerous temptation. For few sinners begin with the very highest crimes; usually being seduced at first into smaller transgressions, they become hardened by degrees, till at length they run into the greatest and most capital offences.

SUNDAY XI.

I. *Of* deceit *in trust.* II. *Of* fraud *in trade, and of the* rules *in traffic and bargaining; to use plainness, no extortion nor oppression, no unjust* weights *and* measures, *nor* bad money; *and of the advantage of* fair dealing. III. *Of* evil-gotten *goods, disquiet of conscience, and the necessity of* restitution. IV. *Of our neighbour's* credit, *or* good name; *including false reports, speaking evil of the dead, censoriousness, false witness, public slander, whispering, despising and scoffing at infirmities, calamities, and sins: of* tale-bearing: *and reasons against these vices.* V. *Of* positive justice: *which requires truth, and condemns flattery, lying, equivocation, envy, and detraction.* VI. *Of* gratitude *to benefactors.*

I. *Of deceit in Trust.*

NEXT to stealing, follows the sin and injustice of DECEIT; which I shall describe under the heads of *trust* and *traffic.*

Breach of trust includes *defrauding* and *promise-breaking*, and is a great sin; for he, who trusts another, doth thereby unite him with a particular bond of society to himself, upon a promise to be served so far as he trusts him. So, if I accept the trust to be an arbitrator in a cause, or an executor of a will, or a guardian to chil-

dren, a factor, or assignee, or a keeper of any pledge, I am admitted as a partner and a representative in such matters, and my fidelity stands engaged for my behaviour in those several trusts. Wherefore, if by my neglect I suffer any of his trusts to miscarry, I am dishonest and injurious to him: because I undertook to do for him all that I can suppose he would have done for himself, had he been master of my skill and capacity. So that, if for a bribe I betray the trust he committed to me, or convert it to my own advantage, I rob him more infamously, than if I demanded his purse by open violence; because I then make use of that trust to betray his interest, by which I was as much obliged to secure and defend it, as if I had exchanged persons, and his interest were my own: therefore, to betray his interest for my own advantage, when he had made me next his own person in power, is perfidiousness and injustice. This should be a caution to all those who have authority, to all public and parish officers, as well as to stewards and servants, that they faithfully discharge their respective trusts. But in every of these frauds, where God or the poor are immediately concerned, as in all estates for, and legacies left in trust to, pious and charitable uses, the theft or breach of trust becomes *sacrilege*; the malignity of which crime is particularly condemned by the sentence of the Wise-man, who says, It is a sin to devour that which is holy.

II. *Of Fraud in Trade.*

The *second* sort of fraud is in matters of *traffic* and *bargaining*, when either the buyer or seller receives any damage or loss: for, bargains in buying and selling being a voluntary exchange of interests, we owe this duty one to another, to deal honestly in making and faithfully discharging our engagements. Deliberate or contrived fraud is in itself a crime of the deepest malignity, and of the most pernicious consequence; a sin which tends to destroy all human society, all trust and confidence among men, all justice and equity, which is the support of the

world, and without which no society of men can subsist. And the breaking through this obligation by deliberate fraud is, of all other sins, one of the most open defiances of conscience, and the most wilful opposition to right reason that can be imagined. Then for a christian, a man that professes a pure and more holy religion, a religion that commands not only common justice and equity but singular love and goodwill toward our neighbour, to be guilty of a contrived and deliberate fraud, which the conscience even of a good heathen would abhor; this is a greater aggravation of the crime: because as the end of buying and selling is to furnish one another with the necessaries and conveniences of life; both buyer and seller have a right proper to them, so to buy and sell, as that the buyer may have the worth of his money, and the seller the worth of his commodity; for otherwise instead of mutually assisting, we must necessarily oppress each other. Therefore,

Notwithstanding it may be a difficult matter to determine nicely what the exact measure is, which in buying and selling ought to be observed between man and man; yet in all cases, when any opportunity of dealing presents itself, it is but asking ourselves, How we would be dealt by in the same circumstances? And our answer to that is our duty to those we deal with. I know how I should expect to be used, if my neighbour and I had changed persons and circumstances: my heart tells me, that I should think it reasonable to expect such measures from him, and therefore he hath reason to expect the same from me: when I consult myself how I would be dealt by, those very passions, which incline me to wrong others, will instruct me to do them justice. Consequently, there is no rule in the world can be pressed with fewer incumbrances, or darkened with less intricacy; none that can lie open to larger use, or be readier at present application, or more obvious to all capacities. How then can men pretend to excuse themselves, when their duty lies so plainly before them: or would not do their duty, when they do understand it? Therefore,

Use *plainness* and *simplicity* in all your dealings: do not, by disparaging another's commodity, or overvalu-

ing your own, endeavour to draw on an advantageous bargain; neither ask far beyond, nor bid much below, what reason must inform you to be the real worth. Do not say you cannot take less, or give more, when you know you may with sufficient profit to yourself. Make no false pretences nor cover what is true; but, so far as in you lies, fit your affirmations and denials to the understanding of the person you deal with, and do not lie in ambush behind your words, to trap and ensnare the person with whom you transact; for not only that which is false, but that which deceives, is unjust in bargains.

Do not *impose* upon any man's unskilfulness or ignorance. So long as you keep within the latitude of lawful gain, you may use your skill against another man in making a bargain: for in an ordinary plenty of commodities there is an ordinary price, which those that deal in them know and understand; and when the contractors equally understand the price, there can be no deception or injustice in the contract, be it made ever so hard. On the contrary, if he whom I contract with be ignorant or unskilful, I must not rate his want of understanding, or set a tax upon his ignorance; but use him justly, as one that reposes a trust in me, and casts himself upon my equity; for, if I do not this, I am guilty of injustice.

The same may be said where a man takes advantage of another's *necessities*. When a poor man is driven by his wants, and forced to sell his wares to supply his necessities; give him the price you would have done, if he wanted your money no more than you need his goods. On the other side, if the poor man be forced to buy on trust, increase your price no higher than what makes you recompense for the loss, which by the rules of trade you sustain by the credit you give him; because he who makes advantage of another's necessities, adds oppression to misery; which is not only injustice, but cruelty. Neither must you take any thing from the commodity or price, for which you have bargained. He who buys a a commodity by weight and measure, hath a right to as much as the common standard allows him: and to take any thing from the bargain by *false weights* or *measures*, or *adulteration*, or by falsly weighing or measuring, is

no less than theft. And he who sells a commodity hath a right to the money for which he sold it: and if the buyer knowingly pay him *uncurrent coin*, or forcibly detain from him any part of the price, he also manifestly violates the indispensable rules of justice. Moreover, be not guilty of *engrossing*, or buying all of a commodity into your own hands, with the sole view of selling it dearer, and thereby to oppress or distress the public. Neither let the people curse you for being the first that hath *raised the price* of goods. Deal not in *stolen goods*, knowing or suspecting them to be such; for thereby you become as bad as the thief. Neither let it be laid to your charge that you have taken any advantage of the *mistake* or *oversight* of the seller: for whoever takes more than he bought, or gives any thing less than he bargained for is guilty of theft. And, finally never *justify* your *deceit*, when you are detected of a fraud, by adding lies to your unfair dealing: for a good and quiet conscience is to be valued above the greatest gain; and that man hath but little regard of his conscience, who, to get a shilling more in a bargain, will venture to expose it. For

The usual bait of injustice is gain and profit: this is the common mark that fraud and oppression aim at, though usually they fly short or beyond it, and instead of enriching do finally damage and impoverish men. It is indeed known, that unjust dealing may sometimes raise a man's fortune; but it is as well known, that in its natural tendency it impairs and ruins it; because, by dealing unjustly, he makes it every man's interest to forsake him, and sets a cross upon his own door to warn all customers from entering therein. Is it reasonable to suppose, that any one would knowingly have to do with a knave, that always lies upon the catch to cozen him; with whom he can neither speak nor act securely, but must be forced to stand upon his guard continually? Or, how can a man thrive, when nobody cares to deal with him; when his house is haunted, and his frauds and cozenages appear like sprites at his door, to frighten all men from his shop? So you see that justice in dealing is so necessary to men's thriving in the world, that even they who are not honest are fain to seem so: but for a man to seem to be honest

is nowise so secure as to be really so; for, if he be not the event of things will unmask and set him out. For no man can be secure of privacy in an unjust action; let him carry it ever so demurely, one accident or other will draw the curtain and bring to light the fraud and villainy behind it: so that, how much soever a man may gain by a present cheat, he is sure, if he be discovered, to be a loser at the last. Injustice is as great an error in politics as in morals, and doth bespeak a man to have as little wit as honesty. The sum therefore is briefly this: he that in the whole course of his life acts sincerely and justly, with a continual respect to the reason of things, and to the law of God; that carries on all his undertakings by fair and equitable means, avoiding all frauds and deceits, all base and unworthy practices; this man takes the wisest and surest course to succeed in all his designs, respecting either his present or his future happiness. And,

III. *Of making Restitution.*

If a man should thrive by his fraud and injustice here, what comfort can he take in his *ill-gotten* wealth, when every part of it awakens some sad reflection in his conscience? Yet this is the case, when all a man enjoys, when the very meat which he gorges, and the drink which he guzzles, the clothes which he flaunts in, shall thus upbraid him: O wretched man! we are the price of thy innocence, and thy eternal happiness; for us thou hast freely consigned thy immortal spirit to everlasting confusion! When his bags and coffers cry, guilty! guilty! and every thing he enjoys whispers some accusation against him; what comfort can he take in the purchase of his frauds, oppressions, and cruelties? Yet this is commonly the fate of unjust possessors, who, under the disguise of a cheerful countenance, too commonly wear woeful hearts: The avenging principle within us will certainly do its duty, upon any eminent breach of ours; and make every flagrant act of wickedness, even in this life, a punishment to itself. Moral evil can no more be committed, than natural evil can be suffered without an-

guish and disquiet. Whatever doth violence to the plain dictates of our reason concerning virtue and vice, duty and sin, will as certainly discompose and afflict our thoughts, as a wound will raise a smart in the flesh that receives it. Good and evil, whether natural or moral, are but other words for pleasure and pain, delight and uneasiness. There is no need of arguments to evince this truth; the universal experience and feeling of mankind bear witness to it. For say, did ever any of you break the power of a darling lust, resist a pressing temptation, or perform any act of a conspicuous and distinguishing virtue, but that you found it soon turn to account to you? Did not your minds swell with a secret satisfaction, at the moment when you were doing it? And was not a reflection upon it afterward always sweet and refreshing; health to your navel and marrow to your bones? On the contrary, did you ever indulge a criminal appetite, or allow yourself sedately in any practice which you knew to be unlawful, but that you felt an inward struggle, and stronger reluctance of mind before the attempt, and bitter pangs of remorse attending it? Though no eye saw what you did, and you were sure that no mortal could discover it; did not shame and confusion secretly lay hold of you? Was not your own conscience, instead of a thousand witnesses to you?

Since therefore injustice is a heinous sin, it necessarily follows, that when a man deals unjustly by another, he must either resolve to undo his own act, or to run the hazard of being undone for ever: the former of which is a ridiculous vanity, and the latter a desperate madness. What a vanity is it for a man to do what he resolves to undo, to slander with a purpose to vindicate, and cheat with a resolution to refund; that is, to do any evil thing with a purpose to be never the better for so doing? And seeing every wilful act of injustice binds men over to eternal punishment, and nothing but restitution can release from that sad obligation; it follows that he, who deals unjustly by others, without an intent to make restitution, doth by his own act wilfully oblige himself to endure eternal torments, and the loss of heaven. And for the same reason, that justice and equity is necessary

to be practised at all; for the same reason, whenever any failure has been made in the practice of these duties, restitution ought to be made to the persons who have been wronged. For repentance necessarily supposes a desire that the offence had never been committed. And the only possible evidence of the sincerity of that desire is the making of restitution, wherever it can be done in reality and with effect. Therefore,

Before we can hope for pardon, we must resolve on restitution. Concerning which, observe that it is that part of justice to which a man is obliged by some former contract, or a foregoing fault by his own or another man's act, either with or without his will. The borrower is bound to pay; and much more he that steals or defrauds. In the case of stealing, there is an injury done to our neighbour and the evil still remains after the action is past; therefore for this we are accountable to our neighbour, and we are to take the evil off from him, or else he is an injured person and a sufferer all the while; and that any man should be the worse for me, by my act and intention, is against the rule of equity, of justice, and of charity: I do not that to others, which I would have done to myself; for I grow rich upon the ruins of my neighbour. So that, if the wrong I do to another man be such as is reparable, I must resolve to repair it, or perish eternally. He who does not repair an injury when he is able, does every moment continue to repeat it; and though the first was transient, and died in the commission; yet, if it leaves a continual evil behind it upon the good name or estate of my neighbour, I am as much obliged to remove the evil from him, as I was not to bring it upon him; and while I neglect to remove it, I wilfully continue the evil upon him, and in so doing continue to do him harm. When I rob or defraud a man of his estate, or any part of it, the sin doth not cease with the act of stealth or cozenage, or violence, which ends or expires in the commission; but continues so long as the damage or evil effect of it remains: while he suffers in his estate by my act, and it is in my power to repair it, I continue injuring him. Wherefore, our sin can never be pardoned, till we have restored what we have unjustly took or wrongfully

detained: which we must really perform when we are able. This doctrine, besides its evident and apparent reasonableness, is derived from the express words of scripture, reckoning restitution to be a part of repentance, necessary in order to the remission of our sins: if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, &c. he shall surely live, he shall not die. And the practice of this part of justice is to be directed by these rules following: that person, who is a real cause of doing his neighbour wrong, whether by commending or encouraging it, by counselling or commanding it, by acting it, or not hindering it when he might or ought, by concealing it, or receiving it, is bound to make restitution to his neighbour, if without him the injury had not been done, but was done by him or his assistance; because by him his neighbour is made worse, and therefore is to be put into that state from which he was forced. That person who intends a small injury to his neighbour, and acts it, and by it a greater evil accidentally comes, is obliged to make an entire reparation of all that injury which he intended, and of that which he intended not; which yet was only consequential upon the former act going further than he at first proposed it; because his original mischief was the cause thereof. Whoever hinders a charitable person from giving alms to a poor man, is tied to restitution, if he hindered him by fraud or violence. Whoever refuses to do any part of his duty, without a bribe, is bound to restore that money, which he has unjustly taken. Such as by act, or word, or sign, either fraudulently or violently does hurt to a neighbour's body, life, goods, good name, friends, or soul, is bound as far as is possible to be done, to make restitution in the several instances. The adulterous person is tied to make provision for the children begotten in unlawful embraces, that they may do no injury to the legitimate by receiving a common portion; and, if the injured person demands money, he must satisfy him with money. So the murderer is bound to restitution, by allowing such a maintenance to the children or near relations of the

deceased, as they have lost by his death, considering and allowing for all circumstances of the man's age and health. The slanderer and backbiter who hath really lessened the fame of his neighbour by fraud or violence, is bound to restore it by a confession of his fault, giving testimony of his innocence or worth, doing him honour, or making him recompence by money. Whoever hath wounded his neighbour, is tied to the expences of the surgeon and other incidents, and to repair whatever losses he sustains by his disability to work or trade: and the same is in the case of false imprisonment: in which and all other cases, the injured person is to be restored to that perfect and good condition from which he had been removed by fraud or violence, so far as we are able. A ravisher must repair the temporal injury done to the maid, and give her a dowry, or marry her if she desire it; because this restores her into that capacity of being a good wife, which by the injury was lost, as far as it can be done. Such as rob a neighbour of his goods, or detain any thing violently, or fraudulently, are bound not only to restore the principal, but all its fruits and profits, which would have accrued to the right owner during the time they detain them. Thus the sacrilegious, cheaters of men's inheritances, unjust judges, false witnesses and accusers; those that do fraudulently or violently bring men to sin, that laugh at and disgrace virtue, that persuade servants to run away, or suddenly to quit their places, or commend such purposes; violent persecutors of religion in any instance, and all of the same nature, are all in justice obliged to make restitution. And, in like manner, he who has wronged so many (as in the way of daily trade) that he knows not in what measure he has done it, or who they are, must redeem his fault by alms and largesses to the poor, according to the value of his wrongful dealing, as near as he can judge. Whoever has contracted debts must as soon as he can, discharge them: for as we read that Jesus Christ pronounced salvation to the house of Zaccheus in the same day that he had made restitution; so, if we do likewise, we have the same hope that he will grant us his salvation.

Excellency in any thing or person, is the gift of God, and demands its proper praise and honor; he therefore who excels another, hath a right to be preferred before him, in the esteem and value of the world, and to have his light reflected with more splendour, and his excellencies resounded with higher applauses. He, who, out of a conceited opinion of his own excellencies, detains from a worthy person those acknowledgements, which are due to his virtues; robs virtue herself of one of her fairest jewels, strips off her garments of praise, and buries her alive: since therefore, to rob a virtuous person of his honor and reputation, is so great an outrage to virtue itself; it must also needs be highly unjust and dishonest. The great iniquity of detraction, and of lessening or debasing men's deserved praise and commendations through envy, is injurious to God: who may do what he will, with his own: but it is a higher injustice to man, than to pick his pocket; for he who clips a man's honor robs him of his best and dearest property: while he sucks the veins of another's reputation, to put colour into the cheeks of his own, he lives upon the spoils of his neighbour; and is every whit as injurious to him, as if he should pull down his house, to build himself another by the ruins thereof.

Nevertheless, this unrighteous practice is common: though to envy at God's kindness to others, be (in effect) a murmuring against him. We cannot oppose God more, than by hating and doing evil to a man because God hath loved him and done well to him: nor, in respect of the man, can there be any thing more irrational than to love him the less, merely because he is endued with those qualities, for which, (in reason and justice) we ought to love him the more. As, in all ordinary cases, thankfulness is plainly our duty, for what we have; so nothing can be more unreasonable, than discontent for what we have not. We know not the deserts of others, in comparison with ourselves: We know not the various

and wise designs of providence, in the unequal distributions of all temporary things: we know not how much better (possibly) our present state and condition is for us, whatsoever it be, than any other state or condition; which we, through ignorance and impatience, may be apt most earnestly to covet, and envy in others. But it is not enough that we envy no man; we must not strive to lessen his excellencies, in the opinion of others; for nothing does more truly discover our murmuring and envy, than to endeavour to ruin the credit of any thing in another's esteem: yet this is the case of all those, who would deny, either the kinds or degrees, of his neighbour's extraordinary gifts or graces; by speaking slightly of them, or by endeavouring to cloud them with a malicious report of some other real or pretended infirmity of his, which, like dead flies (as the preacher writes) may corrupt the savour of the ointment. The folly of this sin of envy appears, in the pain and torment it exposes a man to; and, in his being deprived by it, of those advantages which he might reap from such extraordinary gifts of his neighbour; whether they be wisdom or learning, piety or virtue; neither is the folly of detraction less manifest, because it seldom fails of being discovered; and then the detractor lessens his own character; and the neighbour he intended to injure, obtains more esteem for those excellencies, which were the object of the other's envy.

As for the several degrees by which men are advanced, they are so many marks and badges of honor. It is true, by virtue of this, we are no farther obliged to reverence or esteem men, than their virtue or wisdom deserves: yet we are bound, to give them their due titles, and demean ourselves towards them with that outward preference, observance, and ceremony, which their degree and quality requires; on account of that lawful authority, which has raised them to that state and condition of life.

IV. *Of false Reports.*

The *fourth* branch of *negative* justice concerns the CREDIT of our neighbour; because every member of human society has a right to credit and a fair character, if deserving, among his neighbours and acquaintance: for who will trust a man of a lost reputation, or who would willingly have any society with one in whom he cannot confide? So that there is nothing generally more valuable to men than their reputation, or good name, which is rather to be chosen than riches; and it, as a precious ointment, perfumes wherever it spreads: therefore the wisest and best men have been always very tender of preserving it in themselves, and good christians ought consequently to make great conscience of taking it wrongfully from others; because a man's ability to do good to himself, to his friends and neighbours, the success of his affairs, the comforts and interests, and most of the conveniences of life, yea and sometimes life itself, depend upon the credit a man has obtained among his neighbours: and therefore whoever is guilty of defaming his neighbour does in effect the same thing as to defraud him of his property; for so much reputation is always so much power. I shall therefore shew the nature and extent of this sin.

A man's credit is impaired and injured by *false reports:* under which head I shall include the spreading, knowingly and maliciously, false reports concerning any person; either for some private advantage to ourselves, or out of envy to him, or in way of revenge for some conceived affront. But, let what will be the cause, this is a sin of the deepest die, and condemned among the most detestable crimes, where it is declared in scripture, that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: and our Saviour, when the Pharisees spread false accusations against him, told them that they imitated their father the devil; who, when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of

it. But there are still lower degrees of this vice, which as they are less scandalous, so there is more danger of men's falling into them: such are the carelessly spreading of accusations, when we do not certainly know whether they be true or false; calumny, defamation, slander, evil-speaking backbiting, tale-bearing, rash judgment, and the like. Among things inconsistent with the profession of a christian, the apostle reckons maliciousness, debate, malignity, whispering, backbiting, wrath, strife, hatred, variance, emulation, envying, railing, evil-surmising, bitterness, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking; and declares that, if any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Our Saviour likewise admonishes us: Judge not, that ye be not judged.

It may be asked, whether it be lawful to speak ill of the dead? and the answer is, that it either must be lawful in some cases and under proper restrictions, or we must condemn all historians (the sacred ones not excepted) who have transmitted the faults as well as the virtues of the dead to posterity. There is a tenderness due to the memories of those, who are no longer in a capacity to speak for themselves: and therefore we ought to be very careful not to charge any crimes upon them, of which we have not strong and authentic proofs, either from personal knowledge, or from persons of unsuspected veracity. Where there is even a faint probability, that the fact, of which they are accused, might be otherwise than it is represented; there we ought to be silent. But where the facts are so notorious, that they admit of no doubt; so flagrantly bad, that they need no aggravation; there we ought to consider, that there is a curse denounced upon the wicked, that their memories should rot: as there is a promise to the righteous, that they should be had in everlasting remembrance, and their memories be embalmed. It is wrong likewise to speak evil of the dead, for the sake of evil-speaking, without a view to the information of the living

Under this head also we must include the careless

and rash custom of spreading *censorious* and *uncharitable reports* to the disadvantage of our neighbour, without knowing whether there be any truth in the accusation, or any just ground and foundation for the censure; and this is the mother of innumerable sorts of calumny, detraction, slander, evil-speaking, back-biting, tale-bearing, rash judgment, and publishing any thing of our neighbour that is really true, yet needless, and contrary to the laws of charity, declaring their neighbour's real faults to his disadvantage, without serving the puspose of any true benefit either to him or others: for this is against the express command, Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people. The apostle ranks back-biters, with the black crimes of those who are given up to a reprobate mind, and which in the judgment of God are worthy of death; and he puts slanderers and revilers with those that shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and when he reckons up the sins of the last times, evil-speakers are in the list of that black catalogue. St. Peter joins evil-speaking with malice, hypocrisy, and envy, offsprings of hell; and notwithstanding the highest pretences to religion. St. James assures us, that he that bridles not his tongue, that man's religion is vain; and because it is contrary to that wise dictate of nature, of doing to others as we would they should do to us, it is an open violation of the christian doctrine of charity, and is a sign of a weak mind, which is not able to bear the lustre of merit and virtue. And here I cannot but observe, with too much truth, that those, who know a great deal of ill of themselves, are apt to suspect ill of every body else. Thou thoughtest wickedly, that I was such a one as thyself; is the character, which the psalmist gives of an immoral person. They accuse people of wickedness, which they do not know to be true; and censure them for their intentions, which they cannot know to be true. Their talk is a constant satire upon others, and their actions a living satire upon themselves: their foul language is the overflowings of a much fouler heart. It is the mark of a mean and cruel temper, unworthy of a

man, to delight in wounding our neighbour, or to widen those wounds which have been made by others. If we have any talent for saying keen and satirical things, let us be superior to the talent we possess, by shewing how little stress we lay upon it when it comes in competition with our good nature. Let us have no recourse to low stratagems, at once to cover, and yet discharge our little spite. And take it for granted, whatever pleasure we may feel in giving utterance to ill-natured suggestions, there is a much greater in stifling them. This frequently puts on the appearance of friendship, and is ushered in with great commendations; that the wound which is given may be deep and sure. Nevertheless, let whatever false reasons be given for this practice, it is always a breach of the great duty of charity, and it is a mark of false devotion to tear in pieces the reputation of those that oppose our designs, and to think to make an agreeable offering to God of what we sacrifice, either to our interest, revenge, or jealous tempers. For, except some instance of justice or charity requires it, we ought not to expose our neighbour's real faults, because we are not willing that all is true of ourselves should be exposed to public view. What commendation does he deserve, who, at the same time that he has too much good sense to think well of the worthy, has too much charity to speak ill of them, when there is no necessity for it? And it is contrary to that love we owe to our neighbour, which should make us ready to conceal all things that are defective in him, and which, if known, may tend to lessen that good name and reputation he hath obtained. Where a man's vices only hurt himself, and terminate in his own person, there we have no right to publish them; because we can answer no good end thereby: but, where they affect, or may affect others, it is our duty to warn as many as we think proper, a due regard being had to our own safety. Only let us take this caution along with us: before we endeavour to deceive others, let us be sure we are not deceived ourselves. Let us therefore

Incline always to the favorable side, when things

are doubtful. If you should be mistaken on the chable side, God will overlook your mistake, and accept your charity. Endeavour to divert such discourses, and discourage such sort of conversation by all prudent means; as to urge what we can in our neighbour's vindication: but if the matter is too evident to be denied, we may endeavour to diminish the guilt of it, by imputing it to ignorance or surprise, or to the strength of temptation, and by owning that the best people might have found difficulties in such dangerous circumstances and temptations. And we must not shew any pleasure or satisfaction in what is related to our neighbour's prejudice, lest we encourage the detractor, and become partakers with him in his sin.—But nothing is more necessary, in order to master this reigning sin, than a firm resolution never to speak the least ill of any one; for whoever gives himself the liberty to publish the evil he knows of another, and talks with pleasure of such faults, though known by every body, may be likely to fall into real detractions. Because, where the power and corruption of nature is strong, it is difficult to stop; besides, by indulging small neglects we fortify our evil inclinations, and by degrees contract a habit of defamation, and exchange the amiable quality of sincerity for deceit and falsehood. I do not know what pleasure men of this stamp may take, in supposing themselves to stand clear of those vices, which they charge upon others. But this I dare venture to say, that the same meanness and littleness of soul, which makes them so inquisitive to know, so glad to hear, and so industrious to spread any fault of others, would make them commit the very same, provided they had the same temptations and complexion. For vice proceeds from nothing, but the meanness and baseness of a depraved soul. To this class of ill-natured persons those must be reduced, who love, as they express it, to speak their minds upon all occasions; privileged talkers, affronting those above them, insulting those beneath them, and displeasing every body. But if they will always speak freely of what they think; they should first take care to think justly, as

they ought, tenderly of others, humbly and soberly of themselves.

This should be well considered also, by those who make no scruple of *bearing false witness* against their neighbour in a court of justice, or wherever his person, property, or reputation may thereby be injured: such a one is the unrighteous witness, that sells himself to work evil in the sight of the Lord; whose crime increases in proportion to the evil done thereby to his neighbour, and therefore was forbid by God himself; and the offender is adjudged to suffer the same punishment he would by false witness and perjury have brought upon his neighbour. So that, if we are called to give public testimony between man and man, a sincere respect to truth will engage to a careful recollection, before we give our testimony upon the matter: it will dispose to lay aside affection on the one hand, and prejudice on the other, and impartially to speak the truth without disguise or concealment. For though we are not bound in every case to speak the whole truth; yet when a matter depends in whole, or in part, upon our evidence, we are bound not only to avoid all falsehood, but also not to omit any thing which may give light to the true merits of the cause; for such concealment has the nature of a lie, because partial evidences may have the same evil effects, as those evidences have, which are directly false. For we are not obliged to bear no witness at all against our neighbour; we are only to bear no false witness. This rule extends to giving testimonials and characters of servants, or candidates for any employment. To give them no character is to all intents and purposes the same, as giving them a bad one: and to give them a good character upon the whole, when they do not deserve it, is to be easy and good natured at the expence of truth and justice.—And

Let not those, who make a scruple to bear false witness where they think their neighbour directly concerned in his life, property, reputation, or otherwise, yet make a slight of violating truth in common con-

versation, and too frequently aggravate their slanders with *invidious railings* and *bitter reproaches*, think that they shall escape the judgment of God: for this, no less than the preceding injury of bearing false witness, is threatened with the loss of heaven hereafter; as well as disqualifies them from the communion of Christ's church here upon earth. And though it be nowise aggravated, it would be well for those, who are guilty of such evil devices, to remember that, if we hastily put an uncertain story out of our power by making it public, we may prove false witnesses of a scandal, to many who take it upon our authority, without having inclination or opportunity to examine the grounds on which we told it.

Beside this, we should guard against that too common sin of *whispering*, or spreading any report to the disadvantage of our neighbour, under a pretence of enjoining secrecy; and this, God knows, is not in regard to our neighbour, but to prevent ourselves from being discovered to be the authors thereof; and, by that means of working in the dark, the slander like a secret poison becomes incurable, before the injured person can discern it: and therefore may justly be accounted one of the most incurable wounds of the tongue, undermining all society, and too frequently robbing families of their peace, and innocent persons of their good name: it separates chief friends; and therefore the tongue, that is given to this wicked practice, may be properly said to be set on fire of hell.

SUNDAY IX. Part II.

Thus I have given you the nature and extent of this sin; and shall now show you some of the steps toward it, and the principal motives that should deter us from its commission. And as in another case it is said, where there are no receivers, there would be no thieves; so, did not men encourage tale-bearing and whispering, there would be no slanderers. And though we do not prompt them to this wickedness,, yet, if we are ready to credit slanderous reports, we encourage the wicked person, whose intention finishes in the breach of his neigh-

bour's character. Therefore as such a one's accusation is no just ground of belief in us, so we are guilty of injustice to our neighbour to believe the reported evil. But, if we not only believe, but scruple not to become a party in the slander by publishing the same thing, and it may be with some addition, as a story that has been told us, we also incur the guilt, and are liable to the punishment of the whisperer. Then, from the very nature and constitution of human society, there arises originally, in the reason of things, a strong argument why men ought to govern their words as well as their actions; for by the mutual intercourse of both, human society is preserved; and by injurious speech, as well as by unjust actions, that general trust and confidence, that mutual charity and good will are destroyed, on which depend the welfare and happiness of mankind. The constitution of every human society bears some resemblance to the frame of the natural body: and as, in the natural body, all division, disagreement, and disunion of the members tend necessarily to the destruction and dissolution of the whole: so, in proportion, in all communities and societies of men whatsoever, the contention and animosities, the disorders and distractions, arising from slander, calumny, defamation, uncharitableness, and other instances of licentious speech, are inevitably of very pernicious effect. And it is often of mischievous consequence to the person himself that indulgeth his folly. The wise authors of the book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus express themselves clearly on this head: The ear of jealousy heareth all things, and the noise of whisperings is not hid: therefore restrain thy tongue from backbiting; for there is no word so secret that shall go for nought, and the mouth that belieth slayeth the soul. He that can rule his tongue shall live without strife; and he that hateth babbling shall have less evil: rehearse not unto another that which is told unto thee: and thou shalt fare never the worse: whether it be to a friend or a foe, talk not of other men's lives; and if thou canst without offence, reveal them not: for he heard and observed thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee: if thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee, and behold, it will not burst thee

The natural punishment therefore of a licentious and unbridled tongue is the inconveniencies it is very apt to bring, in the course of things, upon the persons themselves. This is the natural ill consequence of this practice, to the persons themselves who are guilty of it. But the sinfulness of it appears principally in the damage it does secretly to others. Slander and defamation is a pestilence that walketh in darkness, and a secret stab against which there is many times no possibility of defence. Another and a more powerful motive to oblige men to restrain licentious speech, is the consideration of its inconsistency with a due sense of religion. Therefore St. Paul reproves with great severity such persons as wander from house to house, being tattlers, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. And lastly, another reason against calumny and detraction is the consideration of ourselves being all of us subject to error. I speak not here of the ill character which is, and ought to be given of all open vice and manifest unrighteousness. But men, who have different notions and apprehensions of things, are very apt to cast reproach upon each other, not for their vices, but for their different understandings. And the same frailty which in a man of the same sect or party shall be no blemish at all, shall in a person of a different party be the most unpardonable crime. But the greater and still more inexcusable degree of this partiality is, when men cast reproach and contempt upon others, for what is truly commendable; for doing what perhaps was their duty to do; for being wiser, or more charitable, or more scrupulous and conscientious than themselves. Our Saviour forbids this censoriousness toward others, under the penalty of being more strictly judged ourselves: Judge not, that ye be not judged. And concerning opprobrious and reproachful language to a man's face, he says, Whosoever shall say unto his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire: much more, against malicious backbiting and uncharitable detraction, would he have used the like severity of expression. The reason is, because such kind of detraction and defamation is really more injurious, and more difficult to be guarded against,

and of more extensive effect than any other way of doing wrong to our neighbour. I conclude therefore with this declaration of our Lord; I say unto you that every idle word (that is, every malicious word) that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment: for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. And

Therefore let us not only avoid the more gross means of slander, but also take care never to strike at a man's reputation, by *despising* and *scoffing* him; especially, if another should be encouraged thence also to scorn and scoff at his neighbour, either on account of some human infirmities, providential calamities, or even for his very sins; for in so doing we do him a great injury. And perhaps most men feel more in the whole of their life from the scornful reproofs of the wealthy, the despitefulness of the proud, taunting sarcasms, and little instances of ill will, neglect and contempt, than they do from the more solid evils of life. You must exasperate a man, when you scorn and make a jest of him, as thinking him not of consequence enough to be hated. For such is the nature of men, they had rather be thought vitious than ridiculous: they can bear you should hate them for their vices; but they cannot endure you should ridicule them for their follies.

If we scoff at a man for the deformity of his body, disagreeableness of his face, the folly or weakness of his understanding; we lay that to his charge which he cannot help; and at the same time impeach the wisdom and justice of God, who thought good to deny him those excellencies of the body and mind. And

The same reason forbids us to reproach any person for those afflictions of body and mind, which are accidental to all men under the providence of God, who for wise, just, and good reasons, corrects the children of men when and how he sees proper: and therefore we ought not to judge what are his motives for so doing, but search our own hearts and repent, lest our sins may deserve the like punishment; and instead of persecuting them whom God hath smitten, and by our talk grieving them whom hath wounded, we should well consider how our Saviour

reproves such evil practices: Suppose ye (says he to the censorious Jews) that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things; I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

In fine, whatever we ourselves are subject to should never be the subject of our derision in another: so that the very sins of our neighbour are no just excuse for our contempt and scoffing; but instead of reproach they should excite our compassion. Bear then with the faults of those about you, as you expect they should bear with yours; faults, which frail nature cannot well guard against, and which therefore good nature should overlook: be just to their merits, charitable to their failings, and tender to their misfortunes; because if we have not fallen into the same or the like faults, it is not our own strength, but God's more special grace, that preserves us. If a person, who in the main has led a good life, should yet, contrary to the general tenor of it, be guilty of some unaccountable weakness, it should teach us to be watchful and circumspect; lest we, who think we stand, should also fall. The miscarriages of a good man, which give an ill-natured pleasure to little minds, suggest to every great mind the most melancholy ideas of the weakness of human nature, in general, but no spiteful or venomous reflections against his weakness in particular. Therefore, upon the whole, he that would insinuate any thing from such cases to his neighbour's disadvantage, is guilty of great injustice to his credit. In which he robs him of what is most valuable in this life; and for which, it may be, he can never make a sufficient restitution: for, where shall we go to recall our invidious speeches? Or, how is it possible to suppose, that all, who have heard our slanders before, shall either hear, or be willing to believe, our public recantations? And if that cannot be done, it is certain we can have no assurance of having repaired the injury done to our neighbour's reputation. We are obliged, by all the laws of God and man, to do all in our power to restore that good name we have blasted; or we cannot hope that God will pardon us, whose eyes are open to, and will punish, every wicked thought, as well as deeds and words. Therefore,

To conclude this point of negative justice, let me exhort you not so much as to wish or think evil of your neighbour; for the same law that forbids us to hurt commands us to love, and not to hate, envy, or wish any evil even to our enemies. So that nowithstanding we bridle our tongue, and lend no hand in any violent oppression of our neighbour, we stand guilty before God for every malicious desire or pleasure we take at his misfortunes. Keep thy heart, says Solomon, with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life: because none but the pure in heart shall see God.

V. *Of positive Justice.*

Having largely shown in the foregoing particulars, how a man may do an injury to his neighbour, I shall now proceed to what divines call *positive* JUSTICE, or giving that to our neighbour which he of right can demand of us as his due. And therefore I shall consider this branch of justice, *first*, as it regards all men in general; and *then*, as it respects each in his proper station of life. Thus

Truth must take place in all our promises and engagements: because, where we were at full liberty before, promises oblige us, and give our neighbour a right; and we should never allow ourselves to make them, unless there be an intention to put them in execution. Therefore, before any one resolves, let him thoroughly consider the matter he resolves upon, and of the arguments that may be urged for and against it. Let him consider his own temper and humour, when he doth resolve. Let him make his resolutions as particular as may be; not only resolving upon the end, but upon the means likewise of attaining that end. And above all, let him be prudent in his resolutions, and not burden himself with unnecessary promises or engagements. To engage to do a thing, when we cannot accomplish it, or have it not in our intention, is really to injure our neighbour, and to wrong our own souls at the last day. And as we must be supposed to promise what we are able to perform, and what we suppose to be lawful; so, if it appears

otherwise, we must repent of our rashness, and not add sin to sin, by executing a rash, unlawful act. Hence it is plain, that no promise can be made in bar of all future contingencies, nor release a man for that which the providence of God makes much more his duty. In short, it is to speak as we think, to do what we pretend and profess, to perform what we promise, and really to be what we would seem and appear to be to all about us. Yet this no wise implies, that we are obliged to tell every man all our mind; but that we must never declare any thing contrary thereto. We may conceal as much of ourselves, as prudence, or any other good reason requires; but we must not put on a disguise, and make a false appearance and empty show of what we are not, either by word or deed. I fear most of that compliment, which is current in common conversation, is contrary to this virtue: because, for the most part, it is nothing but words, to fill up the emptiness of discourse; and a pretence of that kindness and esteem for persons, which either in truth we have not, or not to the degree that our expressions seem to import; which, if done with design is what we call flattery: a very odious sort of insincerity, and so much the worse, because it abuses men into a vain and foolish opinion of themselves, and an ill-grounded confidence of the kindness and good will of others toward them; and therefore sinful. Civility is fit to be professed and practised to all; but profession of respect and esteem is another thing; and when there is nothing to answer it, it is inconsistent with the candour and simplicity of a disciple of Christ. Commendations given to men, which we think they do not deserve, or flattering them upon excellencies they are not possessed of, if they pass with us for words of course now, will not pass so easily in the day of the Lord. By throwing an undistinguished glare of praise on every object, we perceive no object in its just and genuine light. He who commends every one, in effect commends no one. An undistinguishing praise confounds the characters of men, as well as an undistinguishing censure: it does not follow, that we ought to speak well of every body promiscuously and in general; because we ought to make a distinction where there is a difference. So

Speaking every one truth with his neighbour has ever been acknowledged, by men of all conditions, to be our necessary and indispensable duty. Heathens, as well as christians, men of all ranks and professions, of all sects and religions whatever, have agreed in this, that there is an eternal obligation founded on the nature of things, which every man that attends to the dictates of his reason and conscience cannot but own and be sensible of, that our words should be agreeable to our thoughts; and have been sensible that *lying*, or endeavouring to deceive each other, is a base and mean practice, unworthy the dignity of a rational creature, and highly displeasing to God, who has given us the noble faculty of speech to this very end, that it might be the interpreter of our thoughts to each other. The proper notion of a lie, therefore, is an endeavour to deceive another by signifying that to him as true, which we ourselves think not to be so, in the ordinary way of communicating our thoughts, even though they should be signified by nods and gestures. And again, if a man thinks a thing not to be true, and yet declares it to another as certain; though in the event the thing should chance to prove true, yet since he knew it not, and believed it not to be so, his act is still the same, and may properly be called a lie. God expresses himself highly offended with those that practise lying and falsehood: and proclaims a detestation of them: Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Put away lying, says the apostle; lie not one to another, but let every man speak truth with his neighbour. We, who worship the God of truth, ought to speak truth: to use plainness and sincerity in all our words; to abhor falsehood and dissimulation, and those more refined ways of lying by *equivocation* of words, and secret *reservations* of our minds, on purpose to deceive the innocent. In a word, that man who can dispense with himself as to moral duties, who makes no conscience of telling a lie, or breaking his word, what badge soever he may wear, what title soever he may enjoy, it is as impossible that such a man should be a true christian, as it is to reconcile the God of truth and the father of lies. Yet, as all untruths cannot be properly reduced under this sin, let it be ob-

served, that it is no lie to repeat a known falsehood in the way of a narrative, if a man mentions it not as his own sense, but declares it to be false at the same time. And if a sick person would refuse a medicine, likely to be of service to him, if he was acquainted what it was, a physician, a parent, or a friend, may lawfully endeavour to deceive him by any method consistent with truth. Or, if a matter be intrusted with me as a secret, and another would fain discover it, who has no right to know it; if by silence, or by a partial but true account, I can divert his inquiry, it will be no falsehood. But it is not lawful to lie for God, or for the greatest advantage to our neighbours or ourselves; for lying in any kind is a violation of truth, which the best end cannot justify: because we must not do evil that good may come. Therefore, though *facetious* lies may not be a direct breach upon charity, yet they are upon truth, and weaken men's regard for it: and though such inventions may produce some mirth and entertainment for the company, yet they can give none in the reflection applied to ourselves: and upon reflection they only gain us the reputation of impertinent liars.

Is it not strange then, that a man is scarcely to be found that speaking the truth from his heart? as if neither God nor man were able to find him out? But as it is a common observation, there are few liars but at some times discover their own folly, and thereby become the contempt and reproach of all sober and well-meaning men; and as no arts or craftiness can hide it from God, who seeth the heart, and knoweth our thoughts long before, and as he is the God of truth, will certainly punish it, as he has promised with fire and brimstone; so if any one would live comfortably and creditably here, and avoid God's vengeance hereafter, he must put away lying upon any acccout whatever. And

Not only truth, but *courtesy* or good behaviour, is due to all men, from the highest to the lowest station of life: because a crabbed morose temper has more

has more the resemblance of a brute than an indication of a rational creature. Yet

The proud and ambitious man, who looks down with a pharisaical disdain upon his fellow-creatures, and refuses common civility to other men, should remember that the Lord maketh us all, both high and low, rich and poor, and can humble him that exalteth himself. And I scarce know, in any one instance, where men so generally concur to execute God's providence, as in pulling down those mighty men, who had used them contemptuously, when God begins to visit them with adversity.

We must also treat our neighbour with *meekness*.—Be patient, says the apostle, toward all men; never rewarding evil for evil, or railing for railing; no not in our zeal for the cause of religion; because meekness of heart is a condition without which we cannot be admitted into the presence of God. And

Without this virtue there can be no peace, good neighbourhood, love, nor affection in any state or family; because an *angry brawling* man can neither be a good friend nor companion: wherefore Solomon advises us not to make friendship with an angry man, and not to go with a furious man; and declares, It is better to dwell in a wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman. And whoever rightly considers what our Saviour says, that such a one is in danger of hell-fire, cannot easily give way to this sin, which is too often attended with horrid oaths, cursings, execrations, and blasphemies: and as this is the language of hell, they that use it cannot be fit for heaven. Therefore take advice of the apostle: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.

VI. *Of gratitude to Benefactors.*

He also, who doth a good turn, deserves and merits of him that receive it; and he hath a right to what he deserves. Gratitude consists in an equal return of

benefits, if we are able; and of thanks, if we are not. Consequently, every receiver is debtor to his *benefactor*, whether spiritual or corporal. And we must not only acknowledge the benefit received, and pray to God for him; but he owes him, when he hath opportunity a suitable return. And though my benefactor gives me his benefit freely, as having no need of it himself, or not so much as I, and therefore cannot legally demand a repayment of it; yet whatsoever he gives me, he deserves of me: and if ever circumstances change, and he hath my need, and I his ability, I am in conscience as much obliged to repay it, as if he had lent it me upon legal security; because in this case my ability is security for the benefit I owe him, and his need is a just demand of it: and, since what he hath merited of me is his due, I am unjust, if I do not repay him so far as I am able, when his necessity requires it. Yet if either I am not able to repay him, or he hath no occasion for it, I am in justice to express my gratitude in thankful acknowledgements, and, by all the services I can render him to express a willingness to make him a full return. Thus, as in matter of debt, he, who cannot pay all, must compound and pay so far as he is able; so, in the matter of benefits, he who cannot make a complete requital, is obliged in justice to make some composition, and pay so much as his ability extends to; and, if he can do no more, to give thankful words for benefits received, which generous benefactors esteem the noblest return: so he, who receives benefits, without some thankful acknowledgement, acts the part of a swine, that greedily devours the acorns, and never looks up toward the tree whence they drop: and he who requites benefits with injuries, acts the part of Satan, who would fain have thrown that blessed Being out of heaven, who created and placed him therein.

SUNDAY XII.

I. *Of* charity *or* love *to our* NEIGHBOUR'S soul *and* body, *as it respects our* affections, *shewing the effects, motives, and pleasantness of this duty; and,* II. *As it respects our* actions, *shewing in what cases, and how to admonish the vicious, and how to behave toward those that are sick, in prison, or persecuted, with a caution to those that prosecute an offender, go to law, or imprison an insolvent debtor.* III. *Of* charity *to men's* goods, *including* almsgiving; *with the manner, object, proportion, and reward of that duty.* IV. *Of* charity *to our* NEIGHBOUR'S credit, *and* reputation, *with rules to perform it: including,* V. Peacemaking, *going to* law, *and loving our* enemies.

I. *Of* Charity *to our* NEIGHBOUR.

THE *second* general branch of our duty to our *neighbour* is CHARITY. By Charity, I do not mean only almsgiving; for that is only one branch of it, and one outward expression of this duty: I mean the most liberal sentiments and the most enlarged affections toward all mankind. A charitable man will endeavour to see every thing through the mirror of good nature, which mends and beautifies all objects, without altering any. Far from surmising evil, where there is none, he will rather think no evil where there really is; judging it better to err through a good natured credulity, than through an undistinguishing suspicion. He will never hate any body or community of men, provided there be nothing immoral in their profession, however he may dislike some individuals in it. He will not pass a hard precipitate censure upon a whole nation or country. Can any thing good come out of Nazareth? was a low, confined, ungenerous thought: goodness is not limited to, or excluded from any place; the good are diffused throughout all na-

tions, all sects, all persuasions, all ranks and orders of men. True charity ever dwells with a largeness of soul, which takes in all mankind; sincerely wishing that all, who are in any material error, may embrace the truth; and all that embrace it, may hold a pure faith in a pure conscience. In short, true charity is to detest nothing but vice; and to despise nothing but contracted, illiberal notions. This is the *charity*, or the *love* of our neighbour which consists in doing all good offices, and shewing kindness toward our neighbour both in our *affections* and in our *actions*, is a duty to which we are disposed by the frame of our nature, and our inclination to society, in which there can be no pleasure nor advantage, without mutual love and compassion. This is the best expression of love toward God, since our neighbour is God's creature and his image, and the object of his love and mercy. And this is the particular command our blessed Saviour urged upon his disciples so earnestly, as if he required nothing else in comparison thereof: A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. This is the proper badge and cognizance by which the disciples of Jesus were to be distinguished from the disciples of any other profession; so that in the beginning of christianity this virtue was so well practiced, that the very heathens did admire and say, Behold how these christians love one another! Though this commandment may be supposed to have some foundation in nature, yet it is by our Saviour so much enlarged as to the object of it, having extended it to all mankind; so greatly advanced as to the extent of it, even to the laying down our lives for one another; so effectually taught, so mightily encouraged, so very much urged and insisted on, that it may very well be called a new commandment: for though it was not altogether unknown to mankind before; yet it was never taught in this manner, nor so much stress laid upon it by any other appointment. Therefore Christ says, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.

The charity of our *affections* disposes us to love our

neighbour in such a manner, that if he be virtuous, it will make us esteem him; if he be honest, but weak in judgment, it will raise pity and succour; if he be wicked, it will incline us to pious admonition in order to reclaim him: if he receives good, it will make us rejoice; if he receives evil which he cannot redress, it will make us take pity on him; if we can, it will make us relieve him, by supplying his necessity, or by hiding his disgrace, if it be deserved, which is concealing our neighbour's defects; and by wiping it off, where it is not deserved, which is vindicating his reputation or good name. When he is our inferior, it will make us affable and courteous; if our equal, it will make us candid, and ready to maintain a good correspondence; if our superior, respectful and submissive; if we receive good from him, it will make us thankful, and desirous to requite it; if we receive evil, it will make us slow to anger, easy to be intreated, ready to forgive, long-suffering, and merciful when we are justly angry.

In this description of charity toward our neighbour is included a desire to do all the good in our power to their *souls*, *bodies*, *goods*, and *credit*. And first, this should make us concerned for the salvation of their *souls*, and put us upon means to recover them from a state of sin and unbelief. The next branch of charity regards the *bodies* of men, to which we are to wish all health and welfare. Wherefore observe, that although natural blemishes and defects, such as lameness or crookedness, the want of our senses, or the disproportion of our parts or features, render our bodies less useful, or less graceful and lovely, and do not only upbraid us to ourselves, but create a contemptible opinion of us in the minds of others, the suspicion of which is apt to grieve and afflict our minds; charity requires us not to contemn men, not to upbraid or reproach them, upon the account of any bodily infirmity; but to render them all respect, which the graces and virtues of their minds are worthy of. The body is not the man, but the immortal mind that inhabits it; even as the richest diamonds often wear the roughest

coats. So that such natural blemishes are infelicities, which men cannot prevent and rectify; and therefore to deride and expose them for any blemish in their composition is to fling salt into their wounds, to fret and inflame their miserable condition. Nor must our desires for our neighbour's welfare stop here; for whoever does not wish that his neighbour's *goods* and *credit* may thrive and prosper, can never be said to love his neighbour as himself.

So when the love of God secures our own duty: when it makes us earnestly concerned, that all the world should be influenced by the same divine flame, and that our neighbour should become a fit object of infinite mercy: when we are sensibly touched with the blindness and obstinacy of wicked christians; and endeavour by proper methods to cure their ignorance and to remove their great indifference as to the business of religion: when we are careful to propose and establish the rules of piety in our families, and among our friends and relations: when our discourse and conversation are edifying: when we recommend it by our own example, and by our prayers for the conversion of sinners, and for the perseverance of the righteous: when we conceal all things that may offend the weak, and publish whatever may tend to increase the love of virtue: when we take all occasions to praise those that live well, to honour them before the world, and to give them the preference to those favours we are able to confer: when the civilities and liberalities we exercise, and the friendships we contract, aim at the recovering the soul from evil ways, and improving it in what is good: when the comfort of relief we give to the poor, the sick and the afflicted, tend to make the design of God's providence toward them effectual for their amendment, if they are bad; or for their improvement, if they are good; that they may learn to adore the Author of their afflictions, and wisely fix their minds upon a good that is stable and permanent; then shall we be sure that we act like disciples of Christ, and that the Holy Ghost has added zeal to our charity; especially when

it is observed to be dealt toward all men without respect of persons. And then this principle of love and charity and good will to mankind, will not only render the mind quiet and easy, calm and composed, but make a man happy in himself, and a blessing and comfort to all about him; and consequently attracts the love and esteem and admiration of all those that see and feel the kind and benign influences of so divine a temper.

This will not only cast out *envy*; for, as the apostle says, charity envieth not, will not suffer us to grudge and repine at another's good: but it also conquers *pride* and a haughty mind; for charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up: whoever therefore vilifies or disdains his neighbour, breaks the command, and forfeits his right to the discipleship of Christ. Put on therefore, says the apostle, bowels of mercy, kindness, and humbleness of mind, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.

It also casteth out *censoriousness* and *rash judging:* for charity thinketh no evil of our neighbour's words or actions; and believeth nothing but what is good of him; and hopeth all thing for his welfare and credit. So that it is the want of this virtue, that maketh place for unmerciful censures and rash judgments.

Again, charity is *without dissimulation;* disdaineth to speak to a man fair to his face, and injure him behind his back; and despiseth all little arts and contrivances for *private* gain and advantage, which must rise upon the injury of our neighbour. In a word,

Where this christian virtue reigns there can be no *malice* nor desire of *revenge:* for it beareth all things let them be ever so injurious, opposing prayers and blessings to the hottest persecutors, and leaving the issue and vengeance to the Lord, with a full assurance that he will never suffer his servants to be rooted out.

Now this duty of charity must be extended to the innocent and the guilty; we must forgive those that offend us; which forgiveness to *enemies*, peculiar to christians, consists in bearing a sincere affection toward them, though they are malicious and implacable.

There are two kinds of love, which we must distinguish here; the love of approbation or esteem, and the love of benevolence or good-will. Now it may be impossible sometimes to pay the former kind of love, in any great degree, to our enemy; as when his vices far overbalance his virtues: we cannot love with any considerable degree of approbation and complacency, him, who does not appear, upon the whole, lovely to our understanding. But should it be granted, that we could not regard an immoral enemy with any love of approbation; yet still this would not excuse us from showing a love of benevolence and good-will to him. A parent, for instance, is far from approving a child who is stubborn, disobedient, and immoral; yet still this love of benevolence and good-will shall continue in all its force and efficacy: and it is this kind of love which the scripture seems to require from us; if our enemy hunger, we are to feed him; if he thirst, we are to give him drink. Christians deceive themselves, if they think it is enough not to wish evil, and to do no harm; for we are obliged to be ready to forgive them, and to remove all misunderstandings. Where let it be observed, that forgiveness is chiefly taken from abstaining from revenge: and so far we are to forgive our enemies, even while they continue so: and though they do not repent of the evil done to us, we must also pray for them, and do them all kind and humane offices. Again, forgiveness doth signify a perfect reconciliation to those that have offended us, so as to take them again into our friendship; which they are by no means fit for, until they have repented of their hatred: and this is the meaning of that text, of rebuking our brother if he trespass against us, and if he repent to forgive him; which is, according to St. Paul's direction, to forgive others, even as God for Christ's sake forgiveth us: and which we are enjoined by the express command of our Saviour, who hath made forgiveness of injuries the condition by which we are to expect pardon of our sins; and hath in his own person set us a pattern of this virtue, which he practised to the height, rendering good for evil to all the world. Moreover, it tends to the comfort and happiness of our lives; patience and forgiveness, affording a lasting and solid

pleasure, as they restrain tumultuous and unreasonable passions, and prevent many troubles, which flow from a temper that is malicious and revengeful. Our goodness is then perfected, when we do kindnesses not only without merit and obligation, but in defiance of temptation to dissuade us from it. By such a practice we discover a great mind; obtain the most valuable conquest, because gained over our own passions; and show ourselves to be the image of that God, who is affected toward those who are guilty of the greater provocations against his divine majesty. Therefore, considering all these motives, we ought to infer with the apostle, Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another: especially as our pardon before God depends so much upon our forgiving our enemies.

This is again enforced by the consideration of the *difference* of our sins against God, and of our neighbour's offences against ourselves. And, in this comparison, let us consider the infinite majesty of God, and the equality of human nature in every station: and this will dictate that we owe a perfect obedience to our Maker, as the God of all power and might; whereas all powers among men are ordained of God. So all that we enjoy of the necessaries, comforts, or satisfactions of life, are out of the abundance of his goodness and mercy; and they that do not thankfully acknowledge his free gifts, are guilty of the greatest ingratitude; an ingratitude no wise applicable to men, because they differ as much as time and eternity. And lastly, we never sin, but we break God's commands and offend him; but the most envious and malicious person can never find those frequent opportunities to offend his fellow-creature. Which disproportion of our offences against God and man is excellently described in the parable of that lord who forgave his servant ten thousand talents, and of that same servant who would not forgive his fellow-servant one hundred pence.

These considerations may still be heightened by that pleasure, which they feel who are constant in the practice of this great duty; and whose delight may be discerned even at a distance, by comparing it with the disgrace and uneasiness, which its contraries, revenge and malice,

constantly produce, both to our bodies and minds: as also by the manifest and dreadful hazard they run, never to be pardoned of God, who forgive not those that have offended them: and lastly, in consideration of that thankfulness to God, who of his free grace sent his beloved Son to die for us his enemies, and (having brought us into a capacity of happiness) expects such terms as his love exemplifies and demands.

All which considerations will effectually take place in those minds where the *first beginnings* of rancour, malice, and revenge, are opposed and stifled; and without this care, neither those, nor any other motives to christian charity can ever find a place in the heart: because these rather serve to prevent than to cure the wound. Let us therefore cultivate that love, in which there is no torment: whereas a soul embittered with revenge is a perpetual seat of war. Whatever disturbs the calm, easy course of our passions must make us miserable. The life of an angry revengeful man is all over storm and tempest; he is like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. He is a stranger to peace, and all the blessed fruits and effects of it; for where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work: his mind is continually restless and uneasy, agitated to and fro with the violent force of unruly passions, which lead him on from one evil to another, and hurry him many times into those that are of a very mischievous consequence.

Thus I have done with that part of christian *charity*, which regards our affections toward our neighbour. Therefore,

II. *Of Charity in our Actions.*

In the next place, I shall treat of the CHARITY of our *actions:* from charitable and benevolent thoughts, the transition is unavoidable to charitable actions. For the man, that has a hearty determined will to be charitable, will seldom put off men with the mere will for the deed. For, as St. James teaches in regard to faith, our cold love is dead, if we do not approve our hearts before God

by such works of mercy, as shall convince our neighbour, that we sincerely desire the good of his soul, body, goods, and credit. As I said before, that the soul of man has a natural signification; so now I observe again, that the *mind* of man is in that sense understood, to which not only our good wishes are to extend, but whenever our neighbour's mind is oppressed with any heaviness, we must endeavour to comfort and refresh him, by all the christian counsel and advice we are able. And

If the soul in its more noble and spiritual acceptation, be cast down with any dreadful or despairing thoughts, we are still more concerned to attempt our neighbour's support: or, if our neighbour does wilfully run into sin, we must do what lies in our power, in person, or by other proper means, to reclaim him from the evil of his ways: and though they should all prove ineffectual, we must not cease to pray or even to weep in secret for him; because he keeps not God's laws, and because he will not know the things that belong to his peace; for such a neglect is a sin: therefore says Samuel, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you; when he could not dissuade the people from their evil courses.

The body must also partake of our charity: for as St. James likewise observes, If a brother or a sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit either the afflicted or your own soul? for let that man, whose charity only shows itself in his lips, recollect that our Saviour requires the relieving of our neighbour's bodily wants, as a necessary part of our duty; and promises to make it a part of his inquiry at the judgment in the last day; and upon those that wilfully omit it, he has already pronounced that dreadful sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. Therefore, let us endeavour to escape those dreadful judgments, by exercising our charity according to these general heads, at least, set down in the same chapter, by giving meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, harbouring the stranger, cloth-

ing the naked, and visiting the sick and imprisoned: that is to say, we must lay hold on all opportunities to assist our necessitous brethren; and, with the good Samaritan, make no distinction of nation or party, but do all the good in our power, and look upon every object, as a call from heaven to put our pious intentions in practice. Wherefore

Charity toward our neighbour requires us, when we see an obstinate sinner, to give him seasonable *reproofs* and tender admonitions, to reclaim him from his evil conversation. Yet this merciful work of admonition ought to be managed with caution: there is a particular tenderness due to persons under a present affliction, not only that we may not seem to vex them, whom God hath wounded, and persecute them, whom he hath afflicted; but because men are more susceptible of resentment, in proportion to the greatness of their distress. If the person we reprove, be out of our power, we ought to forbear till his passion is down, till his mind is calm and easy: whoever reproves a man, when disordered by passion or intemperance, preaches patience to the wind, which the more he endeavours to resist, the louder it will storm. When one is fit to receive a reprehension, we ought to give it with the greatest privacy: if he offended in public, where there are witnesses, unless the matter be highly scandalous, it is sufficient that we express our dislike of it by our looks and the seriousness of our behaviour; and afterward to show the folly and danger of his sin in private: to reprove men publickly looks more like malice than mercy; especially till we have first made trial of private reproofs, and found them unsuccessful. Nor with our reproofs ought we to mingle lightness or drollery, nor passion, nor upbraidings; but to perform this merciful office with modesty, seriousness, and compassion: to reprove a man lightly or passionately derides and reproaches him for his sin, but never reclaims him from it. Again, we ought to reprove him for matters culpable; not to reprehend him for any innocent freedom, not for a very trifling indecency, but only for plain and unquestionable trespasses upon religion; lest he should look upon our reproofs as the language of a proud and ill-

natured temper: but rather represent that a vicious state doth weaken and disable men's faculties, impair the health and vigour of their minds, and that for their recovery it is necessary, that their thoughts should be fixed on a consideration of the evil and danger of their sins, and of the blessed hopes which God hath set before them, to renounce and forsake them. And since we see so many sorrowful instances every day among men, who in their sober thoughts will lament their follies, and blush in the morning when they remember how their brains were set on float by their last night's intemperance, who yet, when the next temptation beckons them again, return as greedily to it as ever: and though, when they have repented of their sin, they resolve against it; yet when they are tempted, sin again, and call themselves miserable: we in this case particularly are bound in mercy to recommend their condition to the God of all grace and compassion, to beseech him to take pity on their weakness, and with the outstretched arm of his grace to touch their dead souls, and raise them up into a thorough conversion: and though, in all cases of misery, prayer is a proper work of mercy, yet there is none that so much needs our prayers as this.

Charity, requires us to render to our neighbours, friends, and acquaintance, who through *sickness*, *imprisonment*, *persecution*, or any *other misfortune*, have need of our assistance, such good offices as do conduce to their support and recovery; and if their *sickness* be such as will safely admit of conversation, we are obliged to visit them, to cheer their drooping spirits and sorrowful hours with godly conversation, and to administer the supports and comforts of religion; to awaken their minds into serious thoughts and purposes; to resolve their doubts; to comfort and support them with the hopes of glory; and to take all opportunities to prepare their souls for a happy death: that so, whether they recover or not this sickness of their bodies may contribute to their souls health; and if they are poor and indigent, to supply them with such remedies as are necessary to their health and recovery.

When a man is in *prison*, he is in a sort of captivity. Is it not a calamitous condition for a man to be shut up in a close and unwholesome jail; to dwell with hunger and cold, confined to hard lodging and wretched companions; to be withheld from the conversation of friends, from the comforts of diversion, and from business and employment, and all opportunities of making provision for his family in distress! Therefore it is our duty toward these unfortunate men to visit them in their uncomfortable imprisonment, if they are our friends and acquaintance; and to divert their sorrows, to strengthen their hopes, and to cheer them with assurances of friendship; to use endeavours to soften their adversaries, to vindicate their innocence, or to compound with their creditors, if they are not able to discharge their debts. And whether they are our friends and acquaintance or not, charity obliges us, as we have opportunity and ability, to relieve their necessities, to redress their injuries, and to contribute to their enlargements; that they may, by honest industry, make provision for those who depend on their honest endeavours. But

Those who are *unjustly persecuted* for conscience sake, who, to secure their souls, are forced to fly, or to submit to spoil and plunder, to imprisonment, and famine and death, are of all others the greatest objects of our mercy; as they suffer for our common Master, and in our common cause. Therefore if we have any compassion, by what more suitable acts can we express it, than by a kind reception of those, when they fly to us for succour, and a liberal contribution toward their relief and subsistence; and by assisting those with the charity of our prayers, whom we cannot reach with the charity of our alms; by remembering those that are in bonds, to pity and pray for them; and if it were in our power, so to visit and relieve them, as being bound with them; and also to remember those that suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body? And

If it should fall to our lot at any time to *prosecute* an offender in a just cause; we must remember, that though injuries do give us a right to punish the offender by course of law, or by our own power, when at our own

disposal; yet, because men's souls are out of the reach of human punishments, we can exact no other penalties of offenders, but such as affect their bodies with shame or pain, with loss of goods, with wearisome labour or confinement; which punishment is an act of mercy, more than an act of revenge, the end of it being to do good, rather than to return evil for evil: therefore seeing that the end of punishment is doing good, it ought to be executed with a kind intention; not to discharge our rage, or recreate our malice; but to vindicate our right, to reclaim the offender, or terrify others by his punishment. Consequently, in lighter injuries, suppose a man should give me the lie, or call me names, or abuse me with reproachful language, mercy requires me to remit and forgive the fault, and not to strike and wound him, nor rigidly by a vexatious suit at law to exact the hurt of the offender for such trifling offences as do me no harm.

Again, put the case, I have an *insolvent debtor*, that owes me a great deal, and can pay me nothing, and it is in my power according to the letter of the law to cast him into prison, and force him to languish away his wretched life: to what end shall I inflict this punishment? I cannot hope to recover my own by this means; for a prison will pay no debts, as every body must know. Can I pretend to reform him by it? No; for prisons are fruitful nurseries of all evil. Neither can I warn others by it; for what warning can oblige men to do that which is not in their power?

Hence observe, that he is an *unmerciful creditor*, who rather than abate the least part of his due, will strip his poor debtor to the skin, and reduce him to the utmost extremity; and he is an unmerciful punisher that exacts to the full desert of the fault, and stretches his right of punishment to the utmost extent, to make the offender miserable without any service to himself or to the public. In a word, mercy requires us to follow the great example of God, who, in the midst of justice, doth always remember mercy; who makes large abatements of his right to punish us, and never exerts the utmost punishment which our iniquities require. Wherefore we are obliged in pu-

nishing others to mingle mercy with our severities, and proportionably to the offender's penitence, or the pitiable circumstance of his fault, or the necessities of his present condition, to make a favourable allowance.

SUNDAY XII. Part II.

III. *Of Almsgiving.*

This CHARITY is to be shewn towards the *goods* of our neighbour, whether he be rich or poor, by assisting and furthering him in all honest ways to improve and to preserve them. Thus,

If our *rich* neighbour is like to suffer loss, we are not to permit it, if it be in our power any way to prevent it; and we must take all opportunities to advance his profit, when it does not lessen our own substance. But,

If our *poor* neighbour calls upon our charity, we must freely part with our own to supply his necessities; for, as St. John says, Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

If we see our brother have need, pinched with hunger, or parched with drought, his hungry family crying for want of bread and none to give them; children shivering with cold, and drooping with famine, and without any view of relief, while their pined carcases are covered with rags, and more destitute than the beasts of the field, and birds of the air, for want of proper shelter where to lay their heads; then we are obliged by charity to a tender sympathy, to affect our souls with a compassionate sense of the wants of our poor brethren, and represent their condition, as if it were our own: therefore to *relieve* the poor is declared by the apostle to be a sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased, and accepted by him. And consequently the church of Christ hath always joined it, as a proper part of a chistian's duty, to the administration

of the Lord's supper, where, among many other such-like scriptural exhortations, we are commanded to do good, and to distribute forget not. Though indeed, if we ourselves are poor and needy, we are not obliged to pinch ourselves or families, to relieve the necessities of others; for the desire of self-preservation being of all others the most vehement passion in our natures, God doth thereby not only warrant, but direct us to take care of ourselves, and not to sacrifice the means of our own preservation to the necessities of our neighbours. And,

As the obligations we are continually under to practice this duty are great and numerous, it may be useful to distinguish them under their proper heads, as they rise from the consideration either of God, our *neighbour*, or *ourselves*. And with respect to God, Is it not the thing that he has chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free; and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Nothing is more agreeable to the nature of God, and renders us more comfortable to the excellencies of that most perfect pattern, than the exercise of beneficence and goodness. The divine nature is goodness itself; and his bountiful kindness extends itself perpetually over all his works. This is the attribute which he principally delights to exercise; and in which of all others he most expects and requires we should imitate him. Our Saviour in all his discourses proposes this example to us to follow; and frequently repeats it, that hereby only we can truly become the children of our Father who is in heaven. Some portions at least of what we enjoy are due to God, as an acknowledgement of our dependence upon him for the whole: and instead of costly sacrifices and burnt offerings to himself, he requires only that we be willing to relieve the necessities of men like ourselves: and he seems in the wisdom of his providence to have made a very unequal distribution

of the blessings of this life, on purpose that we might have continual opportunities of paying this reasonable homage to him, according to our respective abilities. He undoubtedly designed the good things of this world, not for the gratification of a few of his creatures, but for the benefit of them all. And he hath divided them unequally among us: not that one part of the human race should sink under misery and want, and the other look down with contempt upon them; but that pity and gratitude should be mutually exercised, and the pleasure of doing and receiving good felt among men: that the poor should be serviceable to the rich: they, in return, kind to the poor; and both united in the bonds of mutual goodwill, from a sense of their mutual dependency. It is the return he principally expects from us for all the benefits that he has done unto us. This he declares he will accept as the best expression of our love toward him.

With respect to our *neighbour*, the obligations we are under to practise this excellent duty are likewise great and many. The inducements we have to relieve the miseries and promote the good of our fellow creatures are, God be thanked, both many in number and of various kinds. Our hearts naturally incline us to it: our reason approves of it as right. The more benevolent disposition we are of, the truer peace we have within, and the greater capacity of social happiness, the sweetest part of the enjoyment of life. Willingness to do good is always rewarded with the esteem of mankind; and selfishness of temper is the constant object of every one's aversion. We have frequent experience in ourselves, what suffering is; and are therefore inexcusable, if we overlook it in others. We live in a world, where, if it was not for the exercise of mercy and pity, the face of things would look dreadful with miserable objects; and the multitudes of persons driven to despair make society unsafe.—Besides, we know the vicissitudes of human affairs, and are nearly concerned to encourage by our example, that spirit of goodness and compassion, which we or ours may, on one occasion or other, easily come to

have great need of. We are all partakers of the same common nature, and are therefore under the same ties of common humanity. We are all subject to the same infirmities, all liable to fall under the same misfortunes, all obnoxious to the same wants; and therefore have all of us reason to exercise that compassion which no man knows but he may stand in need of himself. God has in the whole an equal regard to all his creatures; but in the present state has made an unequal distribution of temporal blessings, that one man's abundance should supply another man's want, that there may be an equality, that the wants and necessities of all may be proportionably supplied.

With respect to *ourselves*, it is almost as natural for us to feel an agreeable satisfaction and inexpressible pleasure of mind, upon satisfying a hungry soul with bread, or clothing the naked with a garment; as it is for them to be pleased with the sense of their being relieved from these natural wants. On the contrary, what pleasure, what benefit is there in the possession of those good things, which after supplying our own necessities, and making reasonable provision for our families, are laid up as useless and unprofitable superfluities, if we intend only to secure ourselves against future contingencies? A reasonable provision of this kind is neither contrary to religion, nor inconsistent with charity; but, beyond this, an unbounded desire of heaping up great riches is by no means so advantageous in this respect, as a charitable dispensing them in wise proportions would be. For such is the instability of all temporal things, that no man can ever be so happy as to be out of the reach of misfortune. Before God, the best of men are sinners; and there are but few, whose conversations with men who have been so inoffensive as not to deserve severe returns; and how prosperous soever a man's circumstances may be, the next turn of affairs may tumble him headlong into wretchedness. Since therefore every man may be miserable, what can be more just than to deal with them that are so, as we would be dealt by, if we were in the same circumstances? Consequently it is highly

reasonable that every one should give and ask by the same measures and allowances. Because, as we are equal by nature, whatever is fit for one must be fit for another in the like condition. It is either not fit that I should desire relief, when miserable; or else it is fit, that I should grant relief to others, when they are so: which if I refuse, I condemn myself either for being unreasonable in desiring charity when I need it, or for being unjust in denying when I am asked charity by those whom I am able to relieve. We know not how soon riches may be snatched from us, by numberless unforeseen accidents; or we may as suddenly be taken from them, and our souls be required of us this very night. In this case no other part of them will be really beneficial to us, but that by which works of charity have been before lent to the Lord, who in the life to come will repay it again. And even in respect of our continuance in this present world, that which has been well laid out in doing good to mankind, has a greater probability of turning to our advantage even here (considering the variety of accidents all human affairs are subject to) than that which may have been covetously treasured up. If I should want relief, with what face can I expect it, who am deaf to the wants of the poor? If I will show no compassion, I must take heed that I never need any: for it will be very unreasonable to expect it; because by my unmerciful treatment of others, I set an example against myself, where it would be impudence in me to plead for mercy either in heaven or on earth.

If we give alms out of mercy and compassion, we must do it *cheerfully:* for God loveth a cheerful giver. By compassion we make others miseries our own, and by relieving them we relieve ourselves, and are partakers with them in the comfort. Is it not a great pleasure and delight to see the joy which a seasonable benefaction brings to one in distress? And when I see a man groaning under necessity, if I relieve him, I refresh my own bowels, and nature within me melts into compassion. Therefore when we bestow our alms with an unwilling mind, it is not charity but shame or importunity that moves us; and there is no virtue in them, nor can we

expect any reward. To contribute toward another's relief, because I am ashamed to do otherwise, is rather paying a tax than giving alms: and when nothing can be wrung out of me, but what is distrained by importunity, I gave not for the poor's relief, but for my own quiet, as he did who neither feared God nor man.

Such a one will be so far from being discouraged in his works of mercy by the vain and impious fear of *impoverishing* himself thereby, that he will still abound more and more in charity, upon a due consideration that although this hazard was never so apparent, yet it is the command of God. Do not men rest very well satisfied in their condition, and look upon themselves to be safe enough from want, if they have security given them by some wealthy friend, that he will always supply their need and support them? And has not the charitable man this security given him by God himself, who bids men to trust in him, and to do good, with this assurance, that such shall dwell in the land and be fed?

We must give *seasonably:* not but that all times may be thought seasonable to relieve the poor; yet there are particular seasons when their wants call louder; as times of sickness, scarceness of work, dearness of provisions, or on arrests, before the prison hath devoured them, or after a great loss, when their fortunes are dwindling away; when children are young, and capable of work or instruction, and parents not able to dispose of them; when the placing them out to some honest calling may prevent their turning thieves or beggars, and render them useful to the world; or when they are setting up trade with an insufficient stock, and a little help may encourage their diligence, and advance them to a comfortable livelihood: these are the more proper seasons of almsgiving, in which, by our helping hand, we may rescue many a poor wretch out of deplorable misery, and render their future condition prosperous and happy.

Whenever it is in our power to practice this duty of almsgiving, it ought to be performed with a *merciful intention*, not to court the applauses of men, or to serve any secular designs; but to express our gratitude and duty to God, who has filled us with an overflowing plenty for

that very reason, to do good therewith. If we give our alms to serve a worldly interest, they proceed from self-love; and such pharisaical alms are sordid traffic for applause and interest: and our Saviour cautions us to take heed that we do not our alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise we have no reward of our Father who is in heaven. Neither are we to give that in alms which is none of our own, supposing it hath a rightful owner, to whom he can make a restitution; but where there is no visible owner, the property reverts to the hands of the supreme Lord of the world, who hath settled it as a pension on our poor brethren. To seek after and exact unlawful gains, which we are obliged in justice to restore to the rightful owners, is to make ourselves the thieves, and the poor the receivers; if such practices are done with a view to gather riches for such purposes: for to give away any man's right to supply another's necessity, is not so much an alms as a robbery, in the sight of God. And debtors are obliged in conscience not to disable themselves from being just to their creditors, by being merciful to such as are in need.

The charitable man will also use as much *prudence* as circumstances will permit, to bestow his alms where most needed, and in such a manner as may do the receiver most good, and himself no injury. For if we do not manage our charities with prudence, we shall create necessities by supplying them, and multiply miseries by an unskilful endeavour to redress them: it is with alms as it is with estates, where half doth consist in the discretion of the owner; and charities distributed by a blind superstition, or a foolish pity, many times do more hurt than good. Or what harvest can the world reap from this precious seed of our alms, when they are scattered at all adventures, without any distinction of the cultivated from the fallow ground; so that the birds of prey, vagrants, drones, and beggars, eat them up, while the modest, impotent, and laborious poor are utterly unprovided for? We must not therefore be tempted, by the importunities of idle persons, to prostitute our alms to their intemperance and sloth. What a pity it is, that these good fruits of our charity should be thus abused,

to pamper a company of vagrants, that wander from door to door; while many poor industrious families, that have more mouths to feed than hands to work, lie drooping under necessities and want! And though the former are not to be altogether neglected, when their needs are really urgent; yet prudence will direct our charity to such persons as have fallen from riches to poverty, and are less able to toil and drudge for bread; or to such as are worn out with labour, or disabled with sickness, or oppressed with a numerous family. But first of all we are obliged to relieve our relations, and in all cases to prefer the necessities of those who have any dependence on us. The same prudence will direct us to prefer those alms, which may serve for a constant provision, and put one in a fixed way of living, before those which are transient, which do just hold him up from perishing for an hour, but do not take him out of the deep waters of affliction. And it is doubtless a prudent charity to contribute to the building and maintenance of the public poor-houses for the poor, where they and their children may be provided with such work as they are capable of; and accustomed to industry, and enabled to support themselves in some future state of life. Prudent charity gives its alms in kind rather than in value; gives clothes to the naked, food to the hungry, physick to the sick, and books to the uninstructed: the benefit of this charity to the souls of men appears at first sight; by this means they are instructed in the great points of the *christian belief*, and acquainted with the several branches of their duty which relate to *God*, their *neighbour*, and *themselves*. When a book comes as a *gift* from their superiors, they are at first pleased with it as a mark of their favour, which engages them to read; and then, by the grace of God, the seriousness of the matter, and the importance of the subject, may seize upon their minds, and make them pious christians. And therefore persons of quality and estates, if they have hearts and dispositions to give good books to their servants and tenants, and the poor, particularly where their estates lie, are undoubtedly capable of doing abundance of good; and by this method they become preachers of righteousness, and secure to them-

selves a share with the authors in the reward of such performances. And,

As to the proportion of our charity, it is certain that almsgiving ought to be performed *liberally* and *bountifully:* charity measures its alms, proportions them to the necessities it supplies, not only to rescue the miserable, but to render them happy. Though I should give ten times less than one who hath ten times more, I should be as liberal as he, according to my ability: so the widow's two mites were pronounced by our Saviour a more liberal alms than the rich man cast into the treasury: because he cast in of his abundance, but she of her penury: wherefore though it is impossible to determine the measure of our alms, because the measure of our abilities is so various, charity exacts that we should be liberal *in proportion* to our circumstances. Christ hath not indeed fixed the proportions of any kind of charity: for circumstances vary so infinitely, that general rules concerning such matters are impossible. And this latitude should not give anxiety to any good mind: for we serve a most equitable master. Neither should it give encouragement to bad minds; and make them imagine, that where no thing is ascertained, they may do just as little as they please. For God will expect from every one what may be reasonably expected from them; and hath left this matter at large, not that we may show our backwardness to serve him, but our zeal. And though we may not be able to give alms to our necessitous brother; yet if by representing his necessities to others, who are able to relieve him; if by begging relief for him, which perhaps he is ashamed to do for himself, we can contribute to his support, we stand strictly obliged to it by charity; and this will be as acceptable to God, as the most liberal alms out of our own substance. Where the deed is impossible, God accepts the will for it, and reckons all good works to our account, which he knows he would do, if it were in our power. So when he furnishes us with means to relieve the necessitous, he expects the deed, knowing that we cannot sincerely will the deed, if when it is in our power we do not perform it; the necessity of which deed, to show the sincerity of the will, appears

from this passage of scripture: Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? And since God has not determined any thing concerning it, we must leave men, who best understand their own condition, to the guidance of their own conscience and discretion, who are to consider what is requisite to the discharge of their several obligations. For prudence doth not require of all the same proportion of charity; but of every one according to their different circumstances and abilities: and christian prudence will direct us not to be partial to ourselves in stretching our needs and conveniencies beyond their just bounds, to spare what may be decently spared from too many servants, idle meetings, unnecessary feasts, chargeable apparel, and diversions: and if we thus spare in our needless expence, and lay aside the remains for charity, the consequence will be this; the poor will be more plentifully relieved, and we more able to do it; we shall reap more pleasure and profit from laying out upon the poor, than from wasting it on the pomps and vanities of this world. When any miserable creature would borrow or beg of us, prudence will advise us not to turn him away with scorn, nor yet to remove him at a distance with disdain or violence; but if we see reason to grant him his request, to do it with an open hand, that so the freedom of our charity may raise the comfort of it, and leave no sting in the mind of the necessitous person. We ought not to oppress the modesty of the humble, of those who have been wont to give and not to receive, nor to relieve them with lofty looks, or angry words, or a severe behaviour; nor to expose their poverty by publishing our charity, or conveying it to them in the view of the world; but to hand our relief in such a *secret* and *obliging manner*, that they may receive it with cheerfulness, without confusion and shame.

In fine, as giving of alms is a real expression of our love and gratitude to God, and our saviour Christ; so the apostle tells us, God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the

saints, and yet do administer. He may defer, but he never forgets: you may safely reckon that so much as you have bestowed in works of charity, so much with increase you have secured in the hands of God; who will either return it in temporal blessings, or repay it with interest: think then what is incumbent on you in relation to these things. There are but two reasons, and they are both very bad ones, that hinder men from being charitable according to their power: either covetousness makes them unwilling, or expensiveness makes them imagine they are unable. If the former influences you, consider well that your happiness for ever depends on doing your duty; but your happiness even here doth not depend on enlarging your fortunes. You may, if you will form yourself to it, enjoy great satisfaction in doing good. But what felicity can you possibly find, either in the consciousness of having, or the vanity of being known to have, ever so much wealth more than you have occasion for? Besides, if the enjoyment of man's life doth consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses, charity may often be so contrived by prudence, as not to diminish wealth; and is often so blessed by heaven, as greatly to increase it. And if it be expensiveness that withholds you from charity, in this case also think with yourself, for what purpose is it your Maker hath intrusted you? for vices and follies, or for pity and mercy? You may indeed plead, that luxury, by the numbers it employs, is perhaps the most extensive beneficence: but this is a poor pretence, evidently calculated to make yourself easy in acting wrong. Undoubtedly the wisdom of Providence hath contrived, that many, who will do no good in any other way, shall do some in this. But then it is usually done to those who need it least. A number of persons, well able to take care of themselves otherwise, are maintained, part in idleness, and part in professions of no manner of use; while the true object of compassion, the infirm and helpless, are left unregarded to suffer and perish. Luxury therefore contributes nothing to answer the intent of christian charities. And even those it is pretended

to provide for, it teaches at the same time to ruin themselves by the imitation of it. And in proportion as it prevails, it destroys every where both virtue and happiness public and private. Let therefore both the frugal and the expensive man seriously consider, one, what proportion his charity bears to his increase; the other to his profusions; and both think of justifying themselves, not to the world, but to God. Possibly it may seem a good reason to some, for their own neglect of the poor, that the law makes provision for them: and it is certainly an honour to the law that it doth; but no honour to us, that it needs do it. Besides, there are very many cases of great distress, to which legal provision is neither easily nor properly extended; nor can it give by any means so plentiful relief, as should be given, to the greater part of those to whom it may extend. But suppose the law capable of doing every thing that need be done; what would be the consequence of leaving every thing to it? Then we should lose entirely the means we have now, of proving to the world, and to ourselves, the goodness of our own hearts; and of making an undoubted freewill offering to God, out of what he hath given us. Persons of bad minds may indeed take occasion to neglect the poor, from our willingness to relieve them; and thus by their fault, the burden may fall heavier upon us than it ought. But then God, who hath intrusted us, not only in conjunction with others to do our share, but separately by ourselves to do what we can, is not unrighteous to forget this our labour of love; but will take abundant care that whatever we bear cheerfully on his account, far from giving us cause of complaint, shall assuredly be matter of great joy to us in the end: not that we should be so vain as to think we merit heaven thereby; nor may we presume to drive a bargain with God by putting our good works into the balance with an infinite and eternal reward.

IV. *The great Rule of Charity.*

Our CHARITY must also extend to the credit or *reputation* of our neighbour, whether he be innocent or guilty. Consequently, should our innocent neighbour be maliciously brought into judgment, it is our duty not only to vindicate him from false imputations in private, but to offer our voluntary evidence before the court. And though we know him to be guilty, if some other branch of charity or justice does not oblige the contrary, we must not take upon us to divulge his faults, nor to report them upon hearsay: for, as they are men and christians, our neighbours and our brethren in Christ, it is our duty not only to honour good men for their virtues, but to pity the evil for their miseries, to relieve their wants, to conceal their defects, and to vindicate their injured reputation; to pray for them and to take such steps as may probably recover them to a true sense of their spiritual state. Suspicions, fancying the worst designs, and putting the worst interpretations upon words and actions, hard censures and suppositions, are reigning sins among adversaries, too common among those who are otherwise serious and devout; and this not only against particular persons, but on all hands against whole bodies and parties, who, in any thing relating to the times, are of different opinions and sentiments. All which are contrary to the nature of charity, which is always inclinable to think the best, and leans to the side of favour both in judging and speaking of their deeds. Besides, it is plainly contrary to our Lord's rule, who warns us not to judge, that we be not judged; because with what measure we mete it will be measured to us again.—Dwelling upon an injury received, and hearkening to idle tales, increase a fault, and the malice and unworthiness of him that is guilty thereof. By these our resentment is heightened, and our minds are made difficult to be brought into temper; whereas if we did not give way to them, we should find ourselves much more easy to forgive.

And the best means to help us in the practice of this virtue is always to keep before our eyes that grand rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves, which the apostle makes the sum of our whole duty to our neighbour. For though men are so careless of their spiritual affairs, as to wish for no assistance, they are not thereby freed from this rule from those sorts of charities. Because the love of ourselves, which is set as the measure to that of our neighbour, is understood to be that reasonable love which men ought to have for themselves; and therefore though a man fail of that reasonable love he owes himself, yet his neighbour thereby forfeits not his right. Again, what we actually would that others should do to us is not in all cases a rule of our duty; but the lawfulness of the action is to be presupposed: for I may not do or forbear a thing to my neighbour, merely because I am content or desirous that he should do or forbear the like to myself. Now that desire of mine must first be known to agree with God's commands; because a drunkard may be willing to be made a beast by another: but it is not the more lawful for him to do the like to his neighbour. So a man upon evil courses cares not to be disturbed in them by the reproofs of his friends: but that does not lessen his obligation to be a monitor to other sinners, especially to those under his care and government. Neither do we fulfil this rule by doing that to others, which we might be glad they would do to us; but it consists in this, to do all that we can expect from them, as matter of duty and right. For though a poor man might be glad that the rich person would give him a part of his estate, so as to make his circumstances easy and plentiful: yet the rich man, who is master of his own estate, may lawfully gratify such a desire; but he may as lawfully refuse to do it. In like manner, the duty to love our neighbour as ourselves is not, either that we should love any neighbour with equal tenderness as ourselves; for that I conceive is hardly possible; or that we should love every neighbour alike; which if we suppose possible were neither just nor natural: or that we should do for our

neighbour all that he now does, or that we, if in his circumstances, might perhaps wish and desire to be done for ourselves; for such desires may be irregular; or if not sinful, yet unreasonable: but it is to do all that for him, which were our case his, and his ours, we should in reason expect and be glad to have done to ourselves. Human laws are often so numerous, as to escape our memories; so darkly worded, as to puzzle our understandings: and their original obscurity is seldom improved by the nice distinction and subtile reasonings of those who profess to clear them; so that under these several disadvantages, they lose much of their force and influence; and, in some cases, raise more disputes, than perhaps they determine. But here is a law, attended with none of these inconveniencies; the grossest minds can scarce misapprehend it, the weakest memories are capable of retaining it: no perplexing comment can easily cloud it; the authority of no man's gloss upon earth can (if we are sincere) sway us to make a wrong construction of it. What is said of all the gospel precepts by the evangelical prophet, is more eminently true of this: it is a highway: and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. It is not enough that a rule, which is to be of general use, is suited to all capacities, so that whenever represented to the mind, it is presently agreed to; but it must also be apt to offer itself to our thoughts, and lie ready for present use upon all exigencies and occasions. And, as the love a man bears to himself is always sincere, so should the love to our neighbour be, in this respect, as that to ourselves: not mercenary and designing, but disinterested and hearty, intending the benefit of the party we express it to: not indirectly seeking our own profit or pleasure: whoever constantly aims at, and steadily pursues this end, will never greatly fail in the particulars of his duty. So he that loves his neighbour sincerely as himself; and is willing to do to all men, as he desires they should do to him; that thinks himself sent into the world on purpose to do good to others, and looks upon it as the sum and end of his duty to promote the universal peace

and happiness of mankind; will certainly upon this principle regularly and uniformly perform all parts of his duty toward men: he will naturally treat his superiors with cheerful submission, his benefactors with gratitude and respect, his equals with affability and kindness, and his inferiors with gentleness, moderation, and charity.

V. *Of Peacemaking.*

Peacemaking is another great instance of charity; which, though it does not directly fall under any of the former heads, yet frequently contributes to the practice and success of them all: because it will not report of our neighbours any thing false, nor any thing true which may tend to variance; and it will discourage eaves-droppers and tale-bearers, who, out of malice, envy, or idleness, are busy bodies: a peaceable man will never sow the seeds of dissention. If there be any dissention, a peaceable man will so behave himself as not to inflame or widen a breach. If men would behave with this prudence toward those that are at variance, it would go a great way to the shortening of quarrels. It is vain to imagine we may meet with a person that shall please us in every thing: but this we may do, we may find out something that will please us in every person. A man is not fit to live in the world, who does not see several things, without seeming to see them; who does not see thro' the little by-ends and selfish views, which men may have; against which he must use all the reality of caution and distrust, with as little appearances of it as possible, if he would preserve peace. For human nature is not so bad as some represent it: most of the little strifes and contentions which happen, would die of their own accord, if ill natured people (pretending to be friends to both parties) did not blow the fire, and throw on fresh fuel. As coal is to burning coal, and as wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife; where no wood is, the fire goeth out; so where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth. Where the

contention is hot and fierce, a lover of peace will incline both parties to coolness and good temper. If thou blow the spark, it will burn; and if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched; and both these come out of thy mouth. Quarrels proceed out of the mouth, by carrying tales, aggravating offences, or persuading revenge: so damping them proceeds out of the mouth by soft and gentle entreaties; by representing the smallest of the things they quarrel about; and by showing how inconsistent it is with peace to take offence at every thing, or to interpret it in the worst sense. When the passions are hot and inflamed on both sides, though gentle words and entreaties cannot suppress them, they may serve to bring them down. When a man, desirous to make peace, sees that they are resolved to fight it out, he will endeavour that their contention may be ended with as little hurt as may be; he will persuade them to refer the matter in dispute to the judgment of some wise neighbour, where, with less charge and more satisfaction, the strife may be ended; because, though a lawsuit may determine a controversy, it commonly continues a breach of peace and charity among the contending parties. And

Whoever undertakes this good office of peacemaking must take care that he lives a remarkable *peaceable* life himself: for in contending parties one or the other in all probability will be angry at good advice, and endeavour to take off the weight of such admonitions as tend to reconciliation, if the peacemaker be given to contention also; then it may be objected, as the Hebrew did to Moses, Who made thee judge over us? Or at least he may be abruptly silenced with, Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye. Therefore he that would persuade peace in another, must be also peaceable himself.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. To live peaceably with all men, in the strictest sense of the words, is a thing absolutely impossible, and out of our reach; for it depends upon what we are not masters of, the disposition and passions of other men. Let us take what care we can to prevent mistakes, they will sometimes arise; let us with ever so

much caution avoid doing injuries, we cannot always avoid receiving them. Where violent encroachments are made upon our fortune or good name, we not only may, but must vindicate ourselves from them, though breach of peace and an open rupture with any man attend our doing it. Slight affronts and small injustices we may put up with; but where we are wounded to the quick, either in our estate or reputation, we are not at liberty to be silent: to be upon our defence in such cases is a debt we owe to ourselves, our posterity, our relations, and friends, who have all an interest in us. When the cause of true religion suffers from the tongues or pens of libertines and unbelievers; when any open attempts are made by ill men on the constitution of that state, whereof we are members; when an absent friend is traduced by lying lips, or the name of any good and virtuous man is vilified; it is our duty in such cases to stand up, and rebuke this spirit of treachery, malice or profaneness. The honour of God, or the interest of virtue, would, at such a time, be blemished by our silence and forbearance. He that does not openly and heartily espouse the cause of truth, will be reckoned to have been on the other side. And then peace with men can never be eligible, when it applies enmity with God. The precept here given of living peaceably, is easily understood: it is so to demean ourselves in all the offices and stations of life, as to promote a friendly understanding and correspondence among those we converse with: so as to prevent, as much as we can, all outward contention and strife, nay all inward mistakes and jealousies from arising, and to quench and allay them, as soon as we can, whenever they are risen; so as to disagree openly with no man in things of an indifferent nature, and of no moment; and, where the point is of importance enough to deserve to be insisted on, there to do it, with so much candour, and modesty, and sweetness, as not to offend even those we do not agree with. In a word, it is so to conduct our actions, discourses, and dealings, as to make ourselves and others as easy as is possible. Various are the instances of this duty. They live peaceably with respect to the public, who pay a due regard to

the laws of their country, and express a due reverence to their superiors, honouring them sincerely for their virtues and talents; not rashly censuring their actions, but putting the best and most candid construction upon them; not being over busy in matters that are too high for them, and do not concern them. They live peaceably in religious matters, who, are contented to enjoy their own opinions, without arraigning those that may be otherwise minded, without disturbing the public peace: whose zeal for their faith never makes them forget their temper; nor outrun the bounds of christian goodness and prudence; who make great allowance for the weakness of men's reason and the strength of their prejudices, and condemn not all as insincere, who are not so enlightened as they are, but leave them to stand or fall to their own master; praying for them, in the mean time, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth, and endeavouring by all gentle, persuasive methods to reclaim them. Finally, they live peaceably in matters of common life and daily practice, who take care to make their carriage inoffensive and obliging; who are not ready to entertain ill reports of men, much less to disperse them; who whisper about nothing to set friends and neighbours at variance; who mind their own business, without intermeddling much in the concerns of others; who can take a slight affront or injury in conversation without resenting it, and even a great one without returning it.

Men are apt to *go to law* for every trifle; and because they have law on their side, they cannot be persuaded that they are to blame for so doing. Yet it should be considered, that although all lawful suits are not sinful, for a christian may go to law to keep his rightful possession, or to recover what is wrongfully taken or detained from him; yet where there is no sin in the suit itself, there is often in the management of it: so that it is a temptation and a snare, and every man should be cautious how he embarks upon so dangerous a bottom, where justice and charity are in danger of being stranded or thrown overboard. A man at least must be assured that he claims or defends his right; otherwise the lawsuit is vexatious, or worse. What we propose to get or keep should

be of considerable value; or else it savours of a contentious spirit, to hazard our own and our neighbour's peace for a trifle. Victory should not be the motive, but right. Revenge should never mingle with our resentment; for Christ declares against this rigour of the Jewish law. And one of the great springs of lawsuits and contentions, such as verbal trespasses and injuries, will very rarely bear the weight of an action, and acquit the conscience of him who appeals to the laws; because all our works are to be done in charity.

We must not only therefore say that we forgive our enemies, but show the reality of our intentions, by taking all opportunities to do them all the good in our power. It is, I think, our duty to prefer compassion to an enemy, before a matter of mere generosity to a friend, when we cannot exercise both together. The extreme necessity of even our enemies, much more of other persons, is to take place of the mere conveniency of friends and relations; and we ought rather to relieve the distressed, than to promote the happiness of the easy; however the practice of it be disregarded by the world. Otherwise it may justly be feared, that malice still lurks in the heart. But he that fulfils the command of doing good to them that hate him, not only does his duty, and follows the example of our Saviour, but heaps burning coal on their heads, to melt them into love and compassion, and consequently to a thorough reconciliation. So that the great hindrance of the practice of this duty to our neighbour is that *self-love*, which being an immoderate love of our own worldly interests is the foundation of all contention and injustice; because we thereby seek only to please ourselves, whereas we ought also to please our neighbour, for his good to edification: for even Christ pleased not himself. But,

To obtain perfect charity, we must not think it the whole of our duty when this obstacle is removed; because, as every grace is the gift of God, we must pray to him earnestly to work it in us, and send his spirit to frame our hearts in a meek and peaceable temper.

THE THIRD PART

OF THE NEW

Whole Duty of Man:

CONTAINING

OUR DUTY TO OURSELVES.

SUNDAY XIII.

I. *Of* SOBRIETY, *consisting in a right government of our* thoughts. II. *Of* humility, *and of its necessity and usefulness.* III. *Of* pride, *its danger and folly, as it respects the gifts of nature, fortune, and grace.* IV. *Of* vainglory: *its danger, folly, and the means to avoid and overcome it.* V. *Of* meekness, *its advantages, and the means of obtaining it. And,* VI. *Of* consideration, *its benefits, and of the danger of* inconsideration.

I. *Of the Government of our Thoughts.*

WE come now to those duties, which in a particular manner regard OURSELVES, and are summed up by the apostle in the word SOBERLY; for the word *soberly* in its native sense signifies a soundness and firmness of mind, governing and directing inferior appetites and passions, and searching and regulating the whole frame of soul and body in our personal and private capacities. So that in respect to the soul, *sobriety* is a *right governing* our passions and affections, or appetites: which never can be done without a previous regulation of our THOUGHTS; for, as the Wise-man says, We must keep our hearts with all diligence; because out of them are

the issues of life: or the goodness or badness of our lives doth altogether depend upon the attending or not attending to the thoughts, motions, and inclinations of our minds. And therefore it is a very proper question, How hath a man power over his own thoughts? There is not indeed any single answer to be given to this question that will fit all men. Some men by the very principles of their make and constitution are much better able to govern their thoughts than others. Some that are naturally weaker, have by long use and many trials obtained a greater power over their thoughts than others. Again, the same persons that at some times have a greater power over the motions of their minds, may at other times have a less command over them; and this according as their health, or their business, or a hundred contingencies of outward things, do affect them. And.

In all cases the *first motions* of our minds are produced so quick, that there is not time enough given for reason to interpose. Again, when a man's mind is vigorously affected and possessed, either with the outward objects of sense or with inward passions of any kind, in that case he has little or no command of his thoughts. His mind at that time will be in a manner wholly taken up with what it is then full of. Nor will he be able, till those impressions are worn off, to think freely of what he pleases. There are some cases likewise, where a man's thoughts are in a manner forced upon him, from the present temper and indisposition of his body. So that, so long as that habit of body lasts, he cannot avoid those kind of thoughts. This is the case of some deeply hypochondriac persons, many of whom will be haunted with a set of thoughts and fancies, that they can by no means get rid of, though they desire it ever so earnestly We may properly enough call such fancies their waking dreams; as their dreams are their sleeping fancies. But,

Though we cannot in many cases think always of what we would; nay, though we cannot hinder abundance of thoughts from coming into our minds against our will; yet it is always in our power to assent to our thoughts or

to deny our consent to them: if we do not consent to them, but endeavour to stop, and stifle, and resist them, as soon as we are aware of them, there is yet no harm done. Should we be haunted with blasphemous thoughts, and cannot get rid of them; we must consider that our thoughts are no further ours, than as we choose them; that all sin lies in the will, and all will implies choice: that those thoughts therefore, which are not our choice, which we reject with a settled aversion and abhorrence, will never be placed to our account. So that our thoughts, however indecent or irregular they may be, are rather to be accounted the infirmities of our corrupt nature than our sins properly so called. If we close with any thought that prompts us to evil, so as to be pleased with it, to delight in it, to think of pursuing it, till it be brought into action; in that case we are no longer to plead our original corruption; for in that very instance we become actual sinners, or actual transgressors of the law of God. The mind is passive in receiving its notices of things, whether pure or impure; but it is active, in its determination, whether to harbour or discard them. As far as it is passive, it is entirely innocent; as far as it is active, it is accountable: and it certainly is active, when we dwell upon impure thoughts with complacency; when we strengthen ourselves in wickedness, by cherishing the remembrance of past guilty joys, and laying scenes in our imagination for the entertainment of future pleasures. Here then we see in what the government of our thoughts consists; they are not criminal till they have the consent of the will; and the soul can withhold that consent, till it has sufficiently considered the whole case.

If we would keep our hearts in a good frame, and bend our thoughts to good purposes; our first and greatest care should be, to rightly pitch upon our main designs; and to choose that for the great business of our lives, that really ought to be so. For men's heads are fruitful of evasions to reconcile their duty and their interest, when they come in competition: and arguments, such as they are, are never wanting to make that appear reasonable, which is agreeable or profitable to us; except where the case is very glaring and notori

ous. He, who earnestly wishes a thing was lawful, has half consented that it is so: dishonesty has already crept into his heart, and the transition thence to the head is quick and sudden. But

The great concernment of all is to approve ourselves to that great God who made us, and disposes of all our affairs; and who, according as we sincerely endeavour or not endeavour to serve him, will make us either happy or miserable, both in this life and the other.

They that would thus keep their hearts always in a good frame, must have a special care to avoid two things, idleness and loose company. A wise man will never be at such a pass as to say, I have nothing to do; I do not know how to spend my next hour. Idleness, and having nothing to do, is the mother of most of those vain and unprofitable and sinful fancies, in which some men spend their days. And whereas temptations do sometimes come into the way of other men; the idle man is forced to seek out temptations for the shipwreck of his virtue. Loose and impertinent conversation is not much better than idleness; for wherever it is much used, it will so emasculate a man's mind, and take off the edge and vigour of it, as to serious things, that he cannot easily get into a good frame again St. Paul says, Evil communications corrupt good manners. And therefore those people, a great part of whose life is employed in gadding up and down; in play; in merry meetings; in telling or hearing idle stories and the like; it is impossible but their thoughts and inclinations, and the whole frame of their hearts will be suitable; that is to say, very light and foolish; not to say profane and wicked, and atheistical too, if the company they much converse with be of that strain.

Let us be as attentive as possible to the first motions of our minds; and whenever we find that they tend toward something that is forbidden, let us stop them as soon as we can. You cannot perhaps, for instance, prevent a sudden passion of anger from arising in your mind upon twenty accidents; but as soon as you feel this passion, you can thus far stifle it; you can seal up your mouth, so that the passion shall not vent itself in unseemly words.

If any indecent, impure fancies or desires should be excited in you upon any occasion, it was not perhaps in your power to keep them from coming into your mind; but it is in your power to withdraw from the tempation that causes them, and to endeavour to direct your thoughts to some other object; at least not to proceed one step in any outward action toward the accomplishing of those desires. Every check that you give to the first motions of sin, makes the next assault of them the less furious. And, if you constantly use yourself thus to guard and watch over your heart, you will in time obtain such a command over it, that you will not be troubled with a quarter of those irregular desires and passions, which heretofore upon several occasions used to be kindled in you. That you may be able, not only to keep bad thoughts out of your mind, but also to have a constant spring of good ones, converse with discreet and pious persons; read good books, especially the holy scriptures; and take times of meditation and recollection; and above all, offer fervent and constant prayers to God. And,

Notwithstanding what I have hitherto said concerning the diligence with which we are to keep our hearts, yet this is always to be remembered, that with our diligence we must be careful to join *discretion*. My meaning is this; we must have a care not to extend our thoughts immoderately, and more than our tempers will bear, even to the best things. And the way to do that is not to put them too much, or too long, upon the stretch at any one time; but to relax them when there is occasion, and to let them run out and entertain themselves upon any thing that comes next to hand so long as it is innocent.

Another excellent rule for the good government of our thoughts is always to live under a constant sense of God's presence and inspection: For he, that made the eye, shall he not see? And, if he do so see shall he not punish? Hell and destruction are before the Lord! How much more then are the hearts of the children of men? And, if it be so much shame to disclose our wicked, presumptuous, vain, trifling, and vicious

thoughts to our fellow-creatures, as most men account it to be, lest they upbraid or punish them for it; how much more should they be ashamed and dread to admit such thoughts, which are criminal in the sight of God, when they believe he sees and is able to punish them? And,

II. *Of Humility.*

Above all, it will be found of exceeding great use to be clothed with Humility: not that fawning humility of outward expression and behaviour, which covers a false and proud heart; but that humility which consists in the inward frame and disposition of the mind, and in a right judgment, in the main, of ourselves; which retains a deep sense that God created us out of nothing, and that sin reduces us to a state worse than nothing without the mercies of God, and the merits of our Saviour; and which admonishes a man of his own corruption and subordination, and duty to God and man, whose fruits are to be discerned best in a relative view. For, with regard to our superiors in civil stations in the world, true humility consists in obeying them willingly in all things just and lawful; in submitting to the authority even of the froward and unworthy; in not despising their persons, exposing their weaknesses, or insulting over their infirmities. To our superiors in natural abilities, true humility consists not in submitting our understandings to them blindly and implicitly, but in being willing and desirous to be instructed and informed by them; in not envying them the advantages God has given them above ourselves; nor repining, but on the contrary rejoicing, at their being preferred or honoured, according to the proportion of their true merit and capacity. To our superiors in religious improvements, humility consists likewise in rejoicing to see the practice of virtue, and the advancement of the kingdom of God upon earth; not grieving but taking pleasure, to find such persons highly esteemed in the world, and proposing them to ourselves as examples

and patterns for our imitation. With regard to our equals, true humility consists in civil and affable, in courteous and modest behaviour; patiently permitting our equals (when it shall so happen) to be preferred before us; not thinking ourselves injured, when others, but of equal merit chance to be more esteemed; willingly submitting, for peace sake, to many things, if not very unreasonable; yet otherwise such as in our own judgment we should not choose to think best of. With regard to our inferiors in civil stations, humility consists in assuming to ourselves no more than the difference of mens circumstances, and the performance of their respective duties, for preserving the regularity and good order of the world, necessarily required. To our inferiors in natural abilities, or accidental advantages in the world, such as learning and knowledge, riches, plenty, and the like, humility consists in considering, that possibly they have some other gifts which may be wanting in us; and in being willing to communicate to them the advantages we enjoy, that they may be the better for the things wherewith God has blessed us. The true humility of a rich man consists in being willing to assist them by relieving their necessities, endeavouring to make the condition of the meanest easy and supportable to themselves. And in like manner, the true humility of persons endued with more learning and knowledge than others consists in being willing to communicate what they know, and in sincerely desiring that all others may attain the same knowledge with themselves. To our inferiors in respect of religious improvements, true humility consists in being rightly sensible of our own many infirmities, even those of us who may be apt to imagine ourselves to have made the greatest improvements; and in being sincerely solicitous for the welfare and the salvation of all men, it consists in endeavouring to influence men toward religion, by meekness rather than by power; in not affecting to gain the empty applause of men by an outward ostentation of greater piety than others; in condescending to those beneath us, and not disdaining even to yield to them in indif-

ferent things; in bearing their infirmities patiently and without frowardness; in forbearing to judge or despise those that differ from us in opinion; in taking care not to offend, by haughty and presumptuous behaviour, such persons as by meekness might be prevailed upon to believe in Christ, or such as by a kind treatment might be kept from departing into divisions; in taking heed not to impose needless difficulties upon those under our power: for so our Saviour describes the pride of the pharisees. Finally, it consists in using great gentleness even to those that have offended: Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Without practising humility towards superiors, there can be no government; without exercising it towards equals, there can be no friendship and mutual charity: and with regard to inferiors, there are proper arguments to deter us from pride, upon account of every particular advantage we may seem to have over others, whether in respect of our civil stations in the world, or of our natural abilities, or of our religious improvements. Humility therefore will keep us from despising any, and incline us to learn all we can; to set no value upon knowledge that is not attended with a suitable practice: to regard all mankind as our fellow-creatures, and esteem them as God has appointed; and to acknowledge, that by the law of nature we cannot comfortably subsist independent of our fellows. Humility thus tempered will dispose one to the cheerful performance of the duties of humanity to all men: if they are above him, he will cheerfully render them their duties; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour; and if he stands in a superior rank, he will readily condescend to men of low estate. Thus it is as great a contradiction to say, any one is a proud christian, as it would be to say, such a one is a wicked saint. All the gospel, its precepts, its great examples, its glorious prospects, tend to humble the pride of man; and whoever will come after Christ, must in respect deny himself. It is possible that we may obtain the character of humble

people with men, from a modest outside, a condescending carriage and lowly speeches; while God, who searches the heart, may see pride reigning there under these disguises, and that such plausible appearances are intended to support a haughty and overbearing heart: therefore no single branch of goodness deserves more attention, to judge of the state of our souls, than humility: for if we grow in knowledge, and are puffed up with pride, we lose more in goodness, than we gain in profit; if we improve in other excellencies, and exceed in the conceit of ourselves, we make those things nothing in the sight of God, which would otherwise become valuable, offered up to him, by a humble, lowly, and meek spirit. For

Knowledge puffeth up; and he never knew himself rightly, who never suspected himself. We seldom have that charity which covers a multitude of faults in our neighbours; and we much seldomer want that self-love which covers a multitude of faults in ourselves. Many would sooner bear a reflection upon their morals, than upon their understanding: the serpent was early sensible that this was man's weak side, when he used that artifice to seduce our first parents: if they would follow his counsel, they should be as gods knowing good and evil. The deceiver gained his point; man fell into disgrace with his God, and not only propagated sin and death to his posterity, but, as a peculiar legacy, the devil seems to have filled them with a *vain conceit*, that they enjoy the knowledge which he then promised. Hence under this strong delusion no branch of pride more needs a curb, though none has less to support it, than conceit of our own abilities. Consequently, to moderate the conceit of our own sufficiency, we must endeavour to attain to a sense of the imperfection of our nature. It is true, there is a dignity in our nature in comparison of the lower creation: but the faculties given us are limited at the best; and many things are above them which we cannot grasp, things too wonderful for us, and not to be attained by us. For

To a humble mind God's word is a sufficient reason of faith, which should teach us not to be wise above what is written in matters of *pure revelation;* not to venture

to publish our own inventions to account how such things are, not to be positive in them; because such things of God knoweth no man, any further than he has been pleased to make them known by his word. This will make us confess our own liableness to mistake, even where we think we have formed a right judgment. In considering the power of prejudice, or readiness to make hasty judgments, the plausible colours that may be put upon error, we have reason, in most judgments we form, to carry this cautionary thought, it is possible we may be overseen. There is no person but must confess, that he has actually been mistaken in former judgments, even in some where he was very positive and sure; which is a good reason why we should carry the thought of our fallibility about us in other cases.

We should retain a moderate apprehension of our knowledge, when we compare it with the attainments of others. It is true, every good man judges himself in the right in every sentiment he maintains; for if he was convinced it was an error, he would give it up: and it follows, that he thinks those of a contrary judgment mistaken, as long as he judges himself in the right: yet this should not puff him up above measure; he only judges his own knowledge superior to those with whom he compares his own; but at the same time confesses, that in this life we all know but in part; and, though some know less, others know more than himself: though he may be better acquainted with some particulars, yet he grants that others may exceed in other parts of learning; that he may have made less improvement of greater advantages than they have made of fewer opportunities; and that he owes it more to the providence or grace of God than to himself, that he is distinguished from the most stupid and ignorant. None are so apt to run into gross mistakes and infirmities, or so hard to be made sensible of them, as he that overvalues his own parts and wisdom: he, that has no patience to examine any thing justly, counts it a disparagement to suspend his judgment; he understands all things at first sight, and by instinct; and if he judges rightly, he has good fortune; but if not, it is impossible to convince or reclaim him; for he is im-

patient of opposition, disdains counsel, and cannot bear the least contradiction, or endure to be gainsaid; he scorns all instruction and rebuke, and takes it for an affront if you yield not to him in every thing he advances; and so swelled with an overweening esteem of his own abilities, never so much as once dreams that it is possible he may be deceived and deluded. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. Finally, this self-conceit hardens a man in his sins, and makes him deaf to instructions, while he thinks thus of himself, that even his defects are beauties, and he can excuse, if not commend, his own ugliness.

SUNDAY XIII. Part II.

III. *Of Pride.*

Opposite to humility is the sin of PRIDE, which is the thinking too highly of ourselves. It is an overweening conceit of our dignity, founded upon some real or imaginary superiority to our neighbours; of which sin men readily contemn others, and easily excuse themselves, through self conceit or opinion of their own wisdom. For, if we would examine the innermost recesses of the mind, I doubt we should often find, that our own pride is the cause why we tax others with it. Men, elate with the thoughts of their own sufficiency, are ever imagining, that others are wanting in their regard to them, and therefore very apt to conclude, that pride must be the cause why they withhold from them that respect, which in their own opinion they have an unquestioned right to. Hence it is, that their character seldom escapes the brand of vanity, who have the fortune to be possessed of those accomplishments, which would make their detractors vain. We cannot endure any one to lay down, usurp, or force customs, humours, or manners; as if we had no judgment of our own to govern and order our affairs. Pride springs from a partial view of ourselves, a view of the bright side only, without balancing against it our numerous imperfections and defects; how little good we

can perform without the grace of God; and how little we actually do perform even with it. And yet many, who call this pride in another, presume themselves wise enough to set patterns or give laws to every body else. For pride makes men foolish, and void of caution; and this puts them upon doing things that bring them dishonour. It makes men negligent, and improvident for the future; and this often throws them into sudden calamities: it makes men rash and peevish, obstinate and insolent. Other men's follies and vices are always insupportable to those that are entirely devoted to their own. The fuller of imperfections any man is, the less able he is to bear with the imperfections of his fellow-creatures: and this seldom fails to bring down ruin upon them: it involves men perpetually in strifes and contentions; and these always multiply sin, and are inconsistent with true happiness: it disobliges men's best friends, and gives their enemies perpetual advantages against them; and this often draws great inconveniencies upon them: it makes men vain, and lovers of flattery; rejecting those about them who would do them most kindness, and liking those best who do them the greatest injury; and this causes them to be insensible of their own disease, till they suddenly fall under contempt: it makes men impatient of good advice and instruction; and that renders them incorrigible in their vices: it fills men full of vainglorious designs, employing all their thoughts in self-confident imaginations; and this makes men incapable of religious improvements, and to have no relish of true wisdom.

This makes men quarrel with God and his worship. Every objection against the being of a deity and providence is raised by pride and an arrogant opinion of our own understanding; as if nothing could be true or reasonable, but what is within our sight and penetration. Pride is that ruling quality, which of all others, seems to take the fastest hold of us. Proud and haughty scorner is his name, says Solomon. A proud man is very hardly brought to digest the humble duties of the cross, or to admit a belief of the mysteries of christianity: the one are too low for him, and he cannot stoop to the prac-

tice of them; the other are too high for his understanding, and he desires to be excused from entertaining any proposition as true, which he does not perfectly comprehend. If he cannot give himself a certain plain account in what manner, and to what end, God did a thing; he wisely resolves that he did it not at all. If he has not as clear an idea of every term in an article of faith, as he has of those in a mathematical proposition; it is presently unphilosophical, absurd and foolish; invented by those whose interest it is to puzzle men's understandings, that they may have their wills and affections at their service. The proud man pretends to see that some, who set up for greater purity and a demurer show of religion than their neighbours, are really counterfeits, and mean nothing at the bottom, but their own interest; and therefore wisely resolves upon this, that all religion is, like theirs, a convenient trick and pretence only invented by cunning men, to keep silly people in awe, to make princes reign safely, and the priesthood live easily.—But, as for himself, he knows better things than to fall in with the herd, and give up to be ridden by the tribe of Levi: the poorest and most contemptible tribe of the twelve, which had no lot, no inherithance among their brethren, but lived upon the cheat of sacrifices and offerings, and upon driving a gainful traffic for the good things of this world, here paid down to them, by promising and preaching up, to those they dealt with, a recompence in the world to come. Then he sets up openly for proselytes, and a party; runs down all religion, and laughs piety and virtue out of countenance: so that a good and honest man is sure to be his mark wheresoever he finds him; and he is ever shooting arrows against him, even bitter words. When such persons cannot apprehend the usefulness of any part of the creation; when any thing happens that seems confused and disordered; when their wisdom cannot discern the end, benefit, and design of every thing that falls out; presently they charge God with folly and ill contrivance, or banish him out of the world, and impute all to blind chance, or unavoidable fate. Indeed to be cautious, and upon our guard, in

receiving doctrines, and not easily to give our assent to every tale that is told us, is a point of great prudence and very requisite in such a multiplicity of opinions as there are in the world, to preserve us from error. But then we may carry this point too far; we may be scrupulous and circumspect in admitting the testimonies of man, as to reject some good witnesses among several bad ones; and to deceive ourselves oftentimes, for very fear of being deceived by others. A general undistinguishing suspicion is altogether as apt to mislead a man as a too easy and unwary credulity. And to this excess a proud scorner is naturally inclined: he is so possessed with the notion of priestcraft and pious frauds, as to apply it indifferently to all religions, and to every thing in religion: he is so afraid of having his understanding imposed upon in matters of faith, that he stands equally aloof from all propositions of that kind, whether true or false: which is, as if a man should refuse to receive any money at all, because there is a great deal goes about that is false and counterfeit; or resolve not to make a friendship or acquaintance with any man, because many men are not to be trusted. Certainly this is a very great instance of folly: and, in what breast soever it harbours, cannot but indispose a man extremely for the study and attainment of religious wisdom. An extremity of suspicion in an inquirer after truth is like a raging jealousy in a husband or a friend: it leads a man to turn all his thoughts toward the ill-natured side, and to put the worst construction upon every thing; and, in consequence of that, for once that he is really in the right, in his guesses and censures, to be very often and very much in the wrong. Thus

Debates proceed from pride; while men too highly value their own private judgment in things doubtful and indifferent; think meanly of the determinations of their superiors; and will rather sacrifice peace and charity, than give up any trifling opinion they happen to espouse. And there will be no end of them, till we can be brought to think that governors may be wiser and know better than we what is fit and decent

for the public good. Therefore nobody ought to make himself the standard of wisdom, nor expect that every one should yield to his humours, and deny their own inclinations, that they may gratify his. On the contrary, what is more grateful and lovely, and more charming than humility and modesty, a mean estimation of ourselves, and a willingness to yield and condescend? Does it not render us both acceptable to God and men? Does it not carry a singular agreeableness in itself? And though humility may seem to expose a man to some contempt, yet it is truly the readiest way to honor: as, on the contrary, pride is the most improper and absurd means for the accomplishing the end at which it aims. There are no other vices but do in some measure attain their end: covetousness does usually raise an estate, and ambitious endeavours do often advance men to high places: but pride and insolence, and contempt of others, do certainly defeat their own projects. When the proud man aims at respect and esteem, he never attains it; for all mankind do naturally hate and slight him. Again, a proud and conceited temper of mind is very likely to run into mistakes, because pride and fullness of a man's self do keep out knowledge, and stop all the passages by which wisdom and instruction should enter: beside that, it provokes God to abandon men to their own follies and mistakes, and to pursue them with extraordinary punishments in this or the next world: for pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall: and again, every one that is proud in heart shall not be unpunished; for God resisteth the proud, but the meek will he guide in judgment, and will give more grace and wisdom to the humble. Therefore

The way to avoid pride, and to attain humility, is to remember that all the advantages we enjoy, either of body or mind, above others, are not the effect of our merit, but of God's bounty: that those, whom we are apt to contemn, are valuable in the sight of God, the only fountain of true honor: that by having consented to sin we have committed the most shameful action

imaginable, the most contrary to justice and right reason, and to all sorts of decency; and that, as long as we are clothed with flesh and blood, we are still liable to the same offences against the majesty of Heaven. We must suppress all proud and vain thoughts when they first arise in our minds, and especially never suffer them to take possession of our imagination; and keep a constant watch over our words and actions, that we may check the first inclinations to pride and vain glory. And whoever does not thus watch over his own heart will be in danger of falling into this sin; because, if God is so good to bear with him for a while in his folly, he never thinks of repentance; but, mistaking his forbearance, has the vanity to esteem himself a favourite of God; and when at last he is corrected by any manner of punishment from God or man, he is so far from considering its justice and necessity, and his own just deserts, that he murmurs against God, and breathes out his blasphemous hatred against his divine justice; and consequently becomes much more reproachful to his neighbour, who shall attempt by any means to draw him to a true knowledge of himself. Whereas he, that is of a calm and meek temper, is always ready to receive the truth, and holds the balance of his judgment even; but passion sways and inclines it one way, and that commonly against reason and truth. So that pride is a great hindrance to knowledge, and the very worst quality that a learner can have: it makes men refuse instruction, out of a conceit that they are in no need thereof: the sufficiency of their knowledge has hindered many from what they might have known.

The *folly* of pride appears, in that we value ourselves, very frequently, upon things that add no true worth to us; that neither makes us better nor wiser; that are in their own nature perishable, and of which we are not owners but stewards. Or, if the things be valuable in themselves, they are God's immediate work in us; and to be proud of them is the surest way to lose them. The folly of this sin appears by considering the three things whereof men are apt to be proud, the goods of nature, of fortune, and of grace

The *goods of nature* are beauty, strength, wit, *&c.* Now the folly of being proud of any of these appears; because, if we really have them, which we are apt often to mistake, they are possessed, most of them, by other creatures in a greater degree. For is not the white and red of the most celebrated beauty far surpast by the whiteness of the lily and redness of the rose; and is not the strength and swiftness of man greatly exceeded by the strength and swiftness of many other creatures? Neither are they at all durable; for phrensy, sickness, or old age certainly destroys them. And whatever they are, we give them not to ourselves, but receive them from the hands of God.

As for the *goods of fortune*, which are wealth, honour, *&c.* we have no reason to be proud of them; because they add no true worth to a man, and are in their nature perishable: besides, we have them but as stewards; and they are not owing to ourselves; for if they are lawfully got, it is God's blessing; if unlawfully, we have them on such terms that we have no reason to boast of them. Are we proud of riches? riches cannot alter the nature of things; they cannot make a man worthy, that is worthless in himself: the value of the estate may be very great; but that of the man is not at all the greater, if he does not employ his estate as the great engine to procure moral pleasures, and to do benevolent offices. The judicious should consider things intrinsically, and think him the greatest, who strives, as much as in him lies, to make others happy by his benevolence, good by his example, and wise by his instructions. Lastly,

As to the *goods of grace*, which are those virtues men are endowed with; it is a great folly to be proud of them; because, though they are things in themselves truly valuable, yet they are God's immediate gifts to us; and to be proud of them is the surest way to lose them, and the consequence of such a loss is no less than eternal punishment.

IV. *Of Vainglory.*

Another opposite to humility is the sin of VAINGLORY, which is an eager desire of the applause of men; a sin that prevents the admission of Christ into the heart: and consequently sets us in the utmost danger: since all our safety and hope of salvation depends upon our being one with Christ and Christ in us. Besides, this sin is the high road to many more: because he, that is resolved to court the praise of men at all adventures, will never scruple to commit the greatest sins, when they are in fashion, or are supposed in any wise to contribute to gratify his vainglory. Yet this little air, which is no more than a blast or the breath of men, yields no real advantage: for it is no proof of my wisdom and goodness, because another tells me I am wise and good: with which, if he tells it to my face, I must be an arrant fool to be pleased; because it is too often flattery: and there is as much *folly* to be pleased, when applauded behind my back; because it neither brings me pleasure nor profit. Again, he that so eagerly pursues praise as to reject the dictates of reason and conscience, and only takes care to do what may raise his esteem among men, yields himself a slave to every flattering and deceitful tongue, and reaps to himself a painful and uneasy mind. Which pain and uneasiness is much increased by the disturbances and disquietudes and tortures of mind they are under, who instead of praise meet with unexpected reproach. And if we look upon this sin in a christian sense, it will be found destructive both of our prayers, almsgiving, and of every good work: for they, who only do good to be seen of men, must expect no other reward than the portion of those hypocrites, that love the praise of men, more than the praise of God; which is a folly in so high a degree, as not only deprives us of eternal joy, but hurries us into endless miseries. And lastly, if we consider vainglory in regard to some indifferent actions, it not only endangers our eternal state, but it brings upon us the contempt of the wise and virtuous in this life, which is

sure to eclipse all other actions, be they ever deserving of praise.

To avoid this sin of *vainglory*, examine carefully whether you have done any christian duty for the sake of human applause; and check and resist every eager desire thereof in your most indifferent actions. But above all, let duty be the motive; and let reason always direct you to please God, who is able to reward you, rather than man, from whose applause you can never reap any real good. And to conclude, let not your heart be too much exalted even at the just praise of your virtues; because, as they are the gift of God, their glory belongs to him alone. And as for the praise given to indifferent and bad actions (the too common subjects of worldly praise) the former, having no goodness in them, deserve no commendation; and our bad actions should make us tremble, and constant in prayer, lest we thereby incur that woe, which our Saviour pronounces against all such who make sin the subject of their glory, when he says, Woe unto you when men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets. A total self-loathing, however, would be as great a fault, as a clear and unmixed self-liking: it would deaden all the powers of the soul, and sink it into a state of inaction. There is a medium between a just sense of our abilities, and an exorbitant opinion of them. A just consciousness of those talents, with which God hath intrusted us, will give life and spirit to our undertakings, and be a powerful motive to those actions which may make us truly glorious: modesty and discretion will be a bar to those attempts, which being above our sphere may make us ridiculous.

V. *Of Meekness.*

The next christian virtue is MEEKNESS; which implies a calmness and steadiness of mind, and a cheerful and absolute resignation to God's providence, in opposition to fretfulness and murmuring against his appointments. God may allow the complaints of nature under our burdens and exercises: yet he expects we should check and suppress all complaints of him, and every impeachment

of his justice, wisdom, and goodness in his works. Wherefore the meek exercise themselves in a careful restraint and regulation of their passions, reducing them within the bounds of reason and religion, and are of a sweet, courteous, and obliging carriage: the meek will not take offence hastily and without just reason, but be careful that they are not angry without a cause. Neither will they rashly suppose that a provocation is meant; that is, they do not judge by appearances. There may be the aspect, and yet no design of affront or prejudice; and if so, what was not ill intended, should never be ill taken: therefore we should not give way to suspicions, which cannot be supported with evidence, but put the best constructions upon words or actions. Check all resentment, till the grounds for it be well considered; such a precaution would prevent much passion. Again, meekness will not resent higher than the merit of the offence given: supposing a real and a great provocation, a meek man will keep a strict guard upon his own spirit, that his mind be not inflamed by ill usage, nor other people's sins draw him in to speak unadvisedly with his lips. It will make us careful not to render railing for railing, but to break the force of unreasonable anger by gentle answers; moderate replies turn away wrath. It also will avoid rough methods, to right ourselves even from considerable injuries: it will dispose us to try the mildest ways first; to try argument before punishment, and conference before law, and private admonition before we make a public example of our neighbour. And when at last our own security, or the common good shall determine us to seek public justice against any one, meekness directs that it should be done without hatred, and merely with a view to reach those ends which are lawful and commendable. By this we shall be kept in a readiness to be reconciled, when an offence is acknowledged, and reasonable satisfaction tendered; and if he should persist in his ill mind, meekness will guard us against all malice, and make us ready to help the worst enemy in the common offices of life, if he need it; and heartily to pray for him, especially for his repentance unto salvation. It will teach us to moderate our affections and passions, as

not willing to give offence: not to be overbearing in company, full of one's self, to the neglect of others; but to express civility to all, agreeably to their stations, out of a sense of our duty to God, and love to another. By this, such as are in any station of inferiority will be disposed contentedly to submit to the duties thereof; and the same excellent spirit will form persons in superior relations to a lowly and condescending temper: a temper to which Christ has added a blessing, and promised that they who possess it shall inherit the earth: for meekness preserves a man from danger; and while unbridled passions tend to make all about us our enemies, they must be of a very brutish nature indeed, who will be outrageous against a man that studies to walk harmless and blameless, and to give no offence. At least the meek will be free from those vexations and troubles of life, which hasty froward people bring upon themselves, as the fruits of their own ill behaviour, And forasmuch as God's providence and promises secure to them as many good things of the earth as shall be for their real welfare; so if they meet with unjust and ungrateful returns, they may confidently rely upon God as their protector and avenger, who is ready to rise in judgment to save the meek of the earth. So whether they have a larger or less share of outward good, they are prepared, by the mastery of their passions, to enjoy more comfort in what they possess, than those who interrupt their enjoyment by the tumults of their own thoughts. Therefore,

Let us persuade ourselves to seek after meekness in opposition to the folly and danger of anger, and to look upon it as a matter of necessity, that meekness should ordinarily have dominion over passion and pride. It may be, there shall be much difficulty; but we are able, by keeping a careful guard upon our hearts, and observing the beginning of anger in ourselves, to carry the conquest: for it is much easier to extinguish it in the first sparks, than when it has got head. Let us fix it is as a law to ourselves, that we will make a short pause upon the first rise of a resentment;

this will stifle most passions. Besides, if we would lower our inordinate esteem of ourselves, and of this world and its affairs, it would go a great way in removing the fuel of passion and pride. To think often of our own frailty and liableness to offend, and how many indiscretions and weaknesses others have to bear with in us, should cherish in us the spirit of meekness, by considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. We should often remember the indecencies and ill effects of passion. For he that is in a transport of passion appears to be in a fit of madness in every body's eye; and that is the glass in which we should see our own face.

The mischiefs which passion produces in the world are innumerable: the sins it causes are intolerable; and the shame and sorrow for our past follies, which attack us in our cooler hours, are most tiresome. He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls; a city in this condition will be liable, at all times, to be entered by an army. And as long as we live in this world, there will be provocations, temptations to lust, and revenge, and envy: there will be crosses and disappointments; there will be doubtful and suspected sayings; there will be fuel for our passions administered in great abundance, wherever we converse or have any business to transact; which, beside the uneasiness they give to the mind, do seldom fail to shake the constitution of the body; to waste the flesh, and sour the blood, and poison the spirits: and by that means impair the health, bring on diseases, and shorten the compass of man's life. The sad consideration of all is, that, by the influence of these, we contract a vast heap of guilt, and are liable to the angry justice of God, whose authority we all the while contemn, and whose justice and holy precepts we break. Consequently meekness, and patience, and humility, and modesty, and such virtues of christianity, do not in reason tend to dispirit men, and break their true courage; but only to regulate it, and take away the fierceness and brutishness thereof. Experience teaches that

men of the truest courage; have many times least of pride and insolence, of passion and fierceness, when they are swayed by the principles of the gospel. And therefore such as by nature have a stronger proneness than others to be warm or peevish, should know that the duty of meekness is of perpetual obligation. And though it be more difficult to govern their passion yet this is absolutely necessary in the christian religion, and they must take more pains with their own hearts, and be the more earnest in prayer to God for his assistance. Their distemper is not incurable by the heavenly physician: and they will have one pleasure upon a conquest, and above those of milder tempers, it will be more evident that their meekness is not forced.—Or, should we consult reason, we must confess that, when evil consequences may be foreseen, they should rather have fortified us against the tide of passion, than passion be made use of afterward as a plea for its excuse. And a sincere christian will rather consider those effects of his passion, as aggravations of the sinfulness of it; and therefore be more watchful for the future, and diligent to grow in meekness; which will be a preparation for heaven, where neither pride nor passion have any place, but all is calm and serene, peaceable, meek, and happy.

VI. *Of Consideration.*

Consideration is a duty we owe to our souls, by which our state and actions may be preserved from evil. For, by the virtue of consideration, a man is deterred from all rash undertakings, and considers the subject well before he fixes any resolution; which will prompt us to choose and pursue what the understanding represents as good and advantageous to us; and to shun and avoid what is represented as evil and destructive to eternal happiness.

This will teach us not to rest upon a bare faith that Christ died for our sins; or a presumption that we are of the number of God's elect, and are decreed to salvation, which is rather the phrenzy of a distempered

brain, than the effect of a rational judgment founded on the word of God: but it will call us to the law and the covenant, by which we are to be tried at the last day, and convince us that our faith and all our hopes are vain, which are not strictly conformable to the gospel of Christ; by which we are taught that whoever continues in the practice of any one sin, and defiance of God's commands, cannot ever hope to find mercy, without timely repentance.

Seeing then that our life is no more than a gust of breath in our nostrils, we cannot reasonably suppose ourselves to be in the favour of God, till we are made sensible of our own weak and momentary state, and are thoroughly persuaded of the necessity to exercise ourselves in holy affections; as in love and desire of what is good: in hatred and detestation of what is evil: in sorrow, shame, and self-abhorrence, for having transgressed in any particular; in praise and thanksgiving for having been enabled in any tolerable measure to have done our duty: in adoration and imitation, in faith, in hope and charity, and in resignation of ourselves to the Almighty. But would they be persuaded frequently to meditate upon death and judgment; would they represent to their minds what a vast disproportion there is between time and eternity, and consider that the pleasures of sin, at best, are but for a season, but that its punishment is endless and intolerable: I say, could men be brought to think of these things with any seriousness, I doubt not but such thoughts would in time have their proper effect, and would so effectually convince them of the great folly and danger of sin, as to make them in good earnest set about the great work of their salvation. Consideration hath a universal influence upon the whole life of a christian, and is an admirable instrument to quicken our progress in all the graces of the Holy Ghost; and illuminates our understandings with the knowledge of our duty; and stores our memories with all such arguments as are proper to excite us to the performance thereof. This habituates our minds to spiritual objects, and raises them above the perishing things of

this world: this strengthens our holy purposes, arms us against temptations, and inflames all the faculties of our souls with earnest desires of attaining and enjoying our chiefest happiness. And

The want of consideration is the cause why men go on stupidly in an evil way, and are not sensible of the danger of their present course; because they do not attend to the consequences of it. Therefore certainly if men would seriously consider what sin is, and what shall be the sad portion of sinners hereafter, they would resolve upon a better course of life. Can it be thought that any man would live in the lusts of the flesh and of intemperance, or out of covetousness defraud or oppress his neighbour, did he seriously consider, that God is the avenger of such? In most men it is not so much a positive disbelief of the truth, as inadvertency and want of consideration, that makes them go on so securely in a sinful state. Consequently, would men consider what sin is, and what will be the fearful consequence of it, probably in this world, but most certainly in the other; they could not choose but flee from it, as the greatest evil that can befall them.

Again, we must consider our *actions* both *before* we do them, and after they are done. We must not be rash and headstrong: for, would men but take a serious and impartial view of their lives and actions; would they but consider the tendency of a sinful course, and whither it will bring them at last; would the vicious and dissolute man but look about him, and consider how many have been ruined in that very way that he is in, how many lie slain and wounded in it, that it is the way to hell, and leads down to the chambers of death; the serious thought of this could not but check him in his course, and make him resolve upon a better life for the future. Whence we may conclude, that this is the desperate folly of mankind that they seldom think seriously of the consequences of their actions; and least of all, of such as are of concernment to them, and have the chief influence upon their eternal state. None of those consider what mischief and inconveniency a wicked life may plunge them into this world; what trouble and disturbance it may

give them when they come to die; what horror and confusion it may fill them withal, when they are leaving this world, and passing into eternity; and what intolerable misery and torment it may bring upon them for ever. Therefore would men but let their thoughts dwell upon these things, it is not credible that the generality could lead such profane and impious, such lewd and dissolute, such secure and careless lives as they do, without thoughts or remorse. But, whether we consider it or not, our latter end will come; and all those dismal consequences of a sinful course, which God has so plainly threatened, and our own consciences do so much dread, will certainly overtake us at last; and they cannot be avoided nor prevented, by not thinking of these things. Nothing is more certain than death and judgment; and then an irreversible sentence will pass upon us, according to all the evil we have done, and all the good we have neglected to do in this life; under the heavy weight and pressure whereof we must lie groaning and bewailing ourselves for ever.

We must also consider our *actions* when they are past; and by *their consequences* judge whether they be good and according to the rules of the gospel. Such a recollection as this is of great comfort and advantage: if they appear to be good, they become the subject of our joy; and if they are found to be evil, they call us to immediate repentance, and a thankfulness to God, who gives us time to reconcile ourselves in his favour. And hence

We learn the great use of such a consideration; for as every sin must be particularly repented of, before it can be pardoned; so the oftener we call our actions to mind, the better we shall be able to find them out, and repent and resolve against the like for the future. And let him who dares to put this duty off, and lie down to sleep before he has done it, remember that dreadful voice, Thou fool, thy soul shall be required of thee this night! and what then will become of the unrepenting sinner?

SUNDAY XIV.

I. *Of* contentedness, *including its contraries*, murmuring, ambition, covetousness, envy. II. *Helps to and the necessity of contentedness.* III. *Of* watchfulness *against sin, which includes* industry *in improving the gifts of nature, fortune, and grace, and the danger of idleness, especially in tradesmen and servants.* IV. *Of the power the* devil *has to* tempt *mankind, and the means to conquer* temptations. V. *Of those duties which concern our* bodies, *as* chastity, *including the several degrees and sin of uncleanness and* fornication; *and of its mischiefs both to the soul and body.* VI. *Helps to chastity, and means to avoid uncleanness.*

I. *Of Contentedness.*

ANOTHER great proof of our obedience and resignation to the will of God is CONTENTEDNESS, or contentment, which is such an acquiescence of the mind in that portion of outward things we possess, upon a persuasion of its being sufficient for us, as makes us well pleased with the condition we are in, and suffers not the desire of any change, or of any particular thing we have not, to trouble our spirits, or discompose our duty; and, to bring ourselves to this frame of mind, it may not be improper to consider, that,

In the *first* place, this virtue, in which is founded the very ease and comfort of our souls, takes off all *anxiety* and *murmuring* against God and his wise providence. For contentment includes a respect to divine providence in all our circumstances, and an humble submission to the disposal thereof. Happiness is more equally dealt, than we, in our melancholy hours, are apt to imagine. This is certain: that one part of the world are tolerably easy under such circumstances, as would be insupportable to the other. If the poor envy the rich, as exempt from that drudgery to which they are subject; the rich

may sometimes with more justice envy the industrious and temperate poor: because that very drudgery prevents that idle swarm of restless thoughts, that spleen, distate, and want of health, which that high enjoyment of life, luxury, and inaction sometimes breed in them. After we have used a reasonable industry to attain the necessaries of this present life, we ought not to be any further anxious and solicitous about them; but to rely on the providence of God for a continual supply of these things, by his blessing upon our just endeavours; and to be content with that proportion of them he is pleased to bestow upon us in the ways of righteousness. And if we fret, instead of helping ourselves, we, by making him our enemy, encrease our difficulties. The reasons or arguments why we ought thus contentedly to rely upon the providence of God are founded upon these words of our Saviour, Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? He that first gave us life and being, without our contributing any thing toward it ourselves; will he not much more bestow upon us, in the ways of virtue and integrity, things necessary for the support and preservation of that life?

Secondly, It is contrary to *ambition;* which is an unlawful desire of dominion and power, large possessions and profuse living. For the contented person will with pleasure say, Though I have not so large a share as some others, yet have I enough to procure the necessaries of life: though I have not a provision for time to come, yet hath God hitherto given me my daily bread; and what occasion have I to distrust him in his promises? though I have not enough to gratify every random inclination, yet I have sufficient to supply real necessities: though some prosper more, yet the distress of others is greater: though I live more upon Providence, yet have not goodness and mercy followed me? and why should I doubt that in the way of duty they will follow me as long as I live? though I have not every thing I wish for, yet I have more than I deserve at the hands of God: though I am really poor, yet poverty has not always the nature of an affliction, or judgment from God; but is rather merely a state of life, appointed by God for the proper trial and

exercise of the virtues of contentment, patience, and resignation. Therefore,

Let us hence be instructed never to judge of God's love or hatred to persons by the outward circumstances that befall them: let us not conclude, because we are more fortunate in this world than our neighbour, that therefore we are greater favourites with God than he. Perhaps God meant that these happy circumstances as we account them, should be trials of our virtue, and according as we use them, they should prove a blessing or a curse. If we bear ourselves with an even and composed mind, and make use of those advantages we have above other men for the doing more good in the world than other men, and in the midst of our prosperity neither vainly please ourselves, nor despise others, but walk reverently and humbly with our God in all our conversation; then we have some reason to conclude, that these things are really a blessing to us. But, on the other side, if our prosperity tempts us to pride and insolence, to the forgetfulness of God and the contempt of men; if we use the advantage of our power to oppress the weak, and of our wit to overreach the simple, and our wealth to minister to the purposes of vice and luxury, to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; then our great successes, by which we measure God's love to us, are not a blessing but a curse. See then the folly and madness of those, that take not God for their strength; but trust to the multitude of their riches, and strengthen themselves in their wickedness, and think by these means to be fortified against the evils of this life! There are numberless calamities, from which wealth and power can never shelter us: therefore when a man lets go his trust in God, and takes sanctuary in the strength of his own wickedness, he will find himself miserably mistaken, when the day of adversity comes upon him. Our virtue is as much endangered by opulence, which administers numberless incentives to luxury, and temptations to insolence, as it is by poverty. Nay, some who before seemed to want nothing but an ample fortune, as soon as they have acquired it, have from that time wanted almost every thing else to make them valuable: the heat

and warmth of prosperity has called forth those vices, which lay dormant before under the rigour of poverty. What numbers have shortened their days by abandoning themselves to all unmanly pleasures of a dissolute life; who, if they had not been born to an affluent independant state, might have made a distinguished figure in the world? If they had not a fortune to support their follies, and keep pace with their lewd desires; they might have thought it necessary to lay in a stock of moral and intellectual endowments. After all, I am far from denying, that riches give us larger opportunities of doing good: that several make this use of them and improve their own, by enlarging the common stock of happiness; their religion, like the altar, that sanctified the gold, stamping a value upon and dignifying their fortune: but this I affirm, that unless we guard against criminal excesses, riches will, as the apostle expresses it, bring us into a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lusts, and such as drown men in perdition. Such considerations as these are the happy fruits of *contentment*, and must necessarily exclude all ambition from the heart possessed with them.

Thirdly, By this we are enabled also to make a necessary stand against *covetousness*, which is such an inordinate desire of increasing our own substance, as tempts us to use the irregular methods of defrauding and deceiving our neighbour. Be not eagerly and anxiously desirous of what the providence of God hath not thought fit to allot you: be not envious at what others enjoy: be not discontented with your own state and condition in the world. Such a desire of increasing our possessions, as tempts us at any time to use the irregular methods of defrauding or incroaching upon our neighbours, is sinful. It will be wisdom to be easy, though we should compass no more than a subsistence: for covetousness is never satisfied. Do not we see men arrive at one enjoyment after another, which once seemed the top of their ambition? and yet they are so far from contentment, that their desires grow faster than their substance; and they are as eager to

improve a large estate, as if they were still drudging for food and raiment; which should be the bounds of our desires. Thus the miser has so closely associated the ideas of happiness and money, that he cannot part or keep them asunder even when near the concluding scene of his life; and, at the same time that he grows more indifferent to every person in the world, he becomes more strongly attached to the things of it. It was against his covetousness, or unbounded desire, that Christ said, Take heed and beware of covetousness; for man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Both reason and religion command a prudent care of our affairs; and a contented mind will not allow us to exceed herein: this we also may do by engaging in more cares than we can manage with composure of mind, or by suffering any cares to run out into anxiety and discontent. Because whoever from desire of gain do drown themselves in such a hurry of business as is beyond their capacity to manage, defeat their own end, and hurt their souls, not having a reasonable time to attend their better interests. Those, that are not satisfied with having acted the prudent part, and to leave the event to God, but torment and rack their minds about that which is not in their own power, take that thought for the morrow, which our Saviour has condemned.

The necessity of this virtue, therefore, in opposition to *covetousness*, will yet appear more clearly, upon a due consideration, that covetousness is *contrary to God*, our neighbour and ourselves: for, as our Saviour tells us, We cannot serve God and mammon; so it is a general observation, that a covetous man makes his gain the sole object of his desires, prefers his worldly business to the care of his soul, and will risk his very salvation, by lying, cheating, and neglecting his duty to God, in order to make what, in the eye of the world, is called a good bargain; and sticks at no sin, to compass his ends. And,

In regard to *our neighbour;* Covetousness is a breach both of justice and charity; for he that makes no scruple to offend God, and to neglect the great duties of

religion, in order to get money, will never be afraid to trick his neighbour. And as the love of money is the root of all evil, so the man that is swayed with that love, will not scruple to sacrifice both his neighbour's body, goods, and reputation, to gather riches to himself.

In regard to *ourselves*; Does he not sell his soul for those things, which at last must perish with the body? Yet this is the case of the covetous man, who, either by unlawful means, seeks to heap up riches, or having this world's goods, sets his heart upon his wealth; for this is the sentence of the apostle; He shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Besides, it is too commonly seen, that he will scarce allow his own body the necessary refreshments and conveniencies of life. Therefore, as we regard our present and future comfort and happiness, it is our duty to seek for the virtue of contentedness, which will guard us against this sin of covetousness; by which our body and soul are brought into misery. Our duty to God and charity to our neighbour induce us to take pleasure in the welfare of others, whether we share in it personally or not. Shall my eye be evil against my neighbour, because God is good to him? Contentment, as well as charity, envieth not. Whoever is possessed with contentment will not allow himself under any inconveniencies to venture upon the violation of his conscience to remove them; nor amend his circumstances by any acts of fraud or violence, or by making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience toward God and man.

II. *Of Contentedness.*

If we observe the various mercies, which actually attend us in every state, they will strongly oblige us to be content. Our circumstances are never so low and uneasy in this world, but there are some mixtures of mercy and favour to be found therein. Though we lose some relation, yet others are left behind. Though we meet with some disappointments, yet we are not quite stript. See if there be no instances of a strait;

condition than our own; and is it not ingratitude to God to overlook the advantageous parts of our condition? Short life, and the approaches of death, speak the reasonableness of contentment with our present station: and view the finished misery of sinners, that have shot the gulf, who have not so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues; then say, Wherefore should a living man complain? Anxiety and uneasiness is not the way to amend our circumstances. Discontent is not the way to the favours of Providence: nor leads it to the proper steps for the obtaining our desires, but provokes God to be contrary to us, and discomposes our souls; adds the weight of guilt to any burden; stops the enjoyment of the mercies we have, and our thankfulness for them; and is the parent of many great sins, and a discouragement to our christian profession in the sight of all men. They who are continually complaining of inconveniencies, seem capable of relishing any thing but heaven; for which a complaining temper will by no means prepare them. Whereas not to repine at the inconveniencies we meet with here may bring us to that place, where only there are no inconveniencies. And he, who is not discontented with a slender portion of blessings, may have the greatest blessing of all, the Deity to be his portion for ever and ever. But

The apostle had learned to be content, in whatever state he was; not because he could choose his condition, but because by the grace of God he could be reconciled to any state. Men misplace their discontent; they are very well satisfied with what they *are*; they are only dissatisfied with what they *have*. Whereas the very reverse ought generally to take place, and the only desire which we ought to set no bounds to is that of increasing in goodness. A slender allotment of worldly blessings will content an easy, modest, humble frame of mind: and no allotment whatever, no affluence how great soever, can satisfy an uneasy restless, fretful temper, ever seeking rest and finding none, making to itself disquietudes when it meet with none, and improving them when it does. Our wants accord-

ing to nature's measures are *small*, but according to fancy's they are *infinite*. Would men be persuaded to make their nature and reason the measure of their wants, they might always live next door to *satisfaction*. People judge wrong when they imagine to be assured of content, if they could obtain such a comfort, which their hearts are set upon; for when they are gratified in their desire, a worldly mind will outgrow their attainments, new wants will start up, and they will be as far from satisfaction as at their first setting out. Let us single out whom we please; yet there are very few whom we would exchange conditions with, all circumstances considered in every particular. Such a one we take to be in general very happy: but, if we descend to particulars, and take into the account his age, or his health, or his person, or his abilities, or his temper, or his behaviour; we would rather continue as we are, than to make a thorough exchange. Generally speaking, whatever seeming inequalities there may be, yet they are adjusted either by the real satisfaction which virtue gives, or by the false pleasures which conceitedness and vanity afford its votaries.—Variety of worldly goods will not produce contentment; a small uneasiness, appetite, or passion not gratified, will take away the relish of what is agreeable in life, if headstrong: and no condition can make us happy, unless a foundation be laid for it in the due regulation of our own tempers. There is no state of life, even the most desirable, but is attended with many peculiar disadvantages of its own. We find several who have no considerable advantages of fortune, or honor, or power, contented and easy; and several who possess them all, yet extremely discontented and miserable. We even often think that others are happier than ourselves, and with whom, as to many things we would willingly change conditions. Are we engaged in a life of action and business? How do we applaud the happiness of those that live in ease and privacy, and can command their own time! Do we, on the contrary, live in retirement, and have but few affairs to mind? Well, then our time lies upon our hands, and

we complain for want of employment, and call only those happy who are men of business. Are we in great and splendid circumstances, above the rank of common men? Then we feel the cares and burdens that this brings upon us, and only cry up the secure quiet state of those that live in a lower sphere. But are we, on the contrary, in a low condition? None seem so happy as the great, whom we falsely think above the reach of care. Thus are we generally unsatisfied with the present condition in which we are, and apt to like any other better than our own. Such is the nature of mankind, or the nature of things themselves, that no earthly delight or comfort can please us long. A rational way of thinking is therefore an essential ingredient of happiness. We must possess ourselves with just apprehensions of things: we wind up our imagination too high; and things as they are in nature, will never answer to the gay florid ideas, which a luxuriant fancy forms of them. An undisciplined imagination may suggest, How happy should I be, if I could compass such a situation in life! But if calm reason might be suffered to put in its plea, it would answer, Why, just as happy as those that are already in possession of it, and that is, perhaps, not at all. If we place our happiness in moderating our desires, we may be happy even now: but if we place it in enlarging our possessions, we shall not be happy even then. These imaginary wants are often more vexatious to the opulent, than real wants are to the poor. If they are supplied, it is but vanity, and contributes very little to their real enjoyments: as soon as the gloss of novelty is worn off, they become tasteless and insipid. If they are not supplied, it is a vexation of spirit, and a perpetual source of uneasiness. They cannot retrench their pomp and equipage, even when their fortune is considerably impaired. They must, through an ambitious poverty, maintain the show, when the substance is gone. Their joys are pompous and visible, but false and fantastic: their cares secret and concealed, but real and solid. Riches, by making pleasures familiar to them, flatten their relish for them, but give a keener

edge to every pain which they must feel as well as other men; they dull their enjoyments, but point and quicken the sense of anguish and affronts. Therefore let us labour to have our minds content in any state, and endeavour to suit ourselves to any condition, which will not furnish occasions for discontent and uneasiness; and above all, pursue religious courses; for it is written, Seek ye first the kingdom of God, *viz.* not so as wholly to exclude the care of other things: for that is impossible in this present life, and to pretend to it is but enthusiasm, and hinders the spreading of true religion: but seek this chiefly, and in the first place make this your principal and main care; suffer nothing to interfere or come in competition with it: do this above and before all other things; and yet other things need not be left undone. Yet,

We must never expect to be religious without *diligence* in the pursuit of virtue. There are in the course of a christian life many duties to be performed, which require pains and care; temptations to be resisted, which will keep us continually upon our guard: and the scripture frequently calls upon us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; that is, with great watchfulness and industry; to give all diligence, to make our calling and election sure; to follow holiness; to pursue it with great diligence. And this is the very reason why God has so ordained that there is no employment wherein a man may not perpetually be doing something for the honour of God, for the good of men, or for the improvement of the virtues of his own mind. There is no business, nay there is no innocent diversion, wherein he may not make it his chief and constant care to act always like a reasonable man and a good christian. There is no state of life wherein he may not keep a constant eye upon a future state, and so use the things of the present world, as that the great and ultimate scope of all his actions may always respect that which is to come. We can get nothing on any other terms; and without this no man shall ever reach the state of eternal bliss. To which end therefore we must use *watchfulness* and *industry*.

III. *Of Watchfulness and Industry.*

The duty of WATCHFULNESS requires a constant care of our lives and actions, that we be always upon our guard; that we resist the first beginnings of evil, and discover the first approaches of our spiritual enemy; that we may neither be surprised by his snares and enticements, nor unprepared to encounter him whenever he attacks us. In short, it consists in wisely foreseeing the dangers that threaten our souls, and then in diligently avoiding the same.

The consideration of our own weakness and frailty is an argument to promote our watchfulness, not to mention the fickleness, the treachery and deceitfulness of our hearts, and the malice of the devil, who is very inveterate; his malice will make him diligent to watch all advantages against us; and his great design will be to shake our resolution; for if that stands, he knows his kingdom will fall; and therefore he raises all his batteries against it, and labours by all means to undermine this fort. Therefore the necessity of this duty is visible from the nature of our condition in this world, which is surrounded with variety of temptations; so that there is no circumstance of life which is entirely free from some sort of assault or other; all our ways being strewed with snares, from the power and strength of the adversary, who is prince of the air, and wants neither skill nor industry to work our ruin: and this is also visible from our own frailty and weakness, whereby we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; and from the danger of our overthrow, whereby we become liable to the miseries of a sad eternity in a place of torment. Consequently, except we are very watchful, we shall unavoidably be made a prey. He therefore that expects God's grace and assistance to keep him stedfast to his resolution, must not neglect himself, but keep his heart with all diligence, and watch carefully over himself: because God worketh in us both to will and to do; therefore he expects that we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling, lest by our own carelessnes and neglect we should mis-

carry, and so become liable to the miseries of a doleful eternity.

This will naturally lead us to INDUSTRY, as well to improve our reason, understanding, and memory, which are the natural riches of the soul, as to cultivate the special graces of God, which are given us for that purpose. For

The *natural* gifts of God are so to be employed, as to promote the glory of God, our neighbour's good, and the salvation of our own souls. And this offers to our consideration these two particulars: *first*, that man should never be idle and slothful, nor intemperate, brutish, nor profane; as all those are who turn their wit to a bad use; who prefer their reason to God's revelation, and load their memories with wicked thoughts, or at least with frothy romances and idle tales. And *secondly*, that every person that does good to the state of which he is a member, by a faithful administration, or by a diligent discharge of his duty in any office he bears, or any place of trust he is called to; whoever is serviceable to others, in assisting them with good counsel in doubtful and difficult cases relating to their souls, bodies, or estates; and whoever is taken up in instructing the ignorant, or in any other such matters, which require the pains of the mind; is so far from being idle, or deserving to be reputed so, or to be looked upon as unworthy of a livelihood, that as his labour is really the most difficult, so it is the most useful and profitable to all; as may evidently appear from this reasoning on the contrary part. For

Whence proceeds so great an increase of the poor? To what are their miseries owing, but to *sloth* and *idleness*? To the neglect of parents, who took no care to educate them, when they were young, in learning, or labour, in some honest way of trade or business, in which they might employ themselves when they were grown up, and be able to provide an honest maintenance. So that, being grown up, they become what they really are, the very bane and pest of society, wasting and devouring the fruits of the diligent man's labour; robbing those who are poor indeed, of the charity which is their due, and which would otherwise be afforded them; and all the

while doing no sort of service to God, or their country, but, what is still worse, spending the time which lies upon their hands in the most profligate courses of lying, swearing, and drinking; in committing sometimes the most detestable crimes of theft, whoredom, and murder. This should be a warning to all parents, and to such as are intrusted with the care and government of youth, that they improve their minds with sound principles of religion and good morality, and bring them up to learning, or in some honest trade and employment, that when they are grown up, they may be able by their own skill and industry to provide a competent maintenance for themselves, and to afford some supply and relief to the real wants and unavoidable necessities of their neighbours. And now suppose a man was born to, or has by his industry obtained so plentiful an estate, that he should take his ease, or indulge himself in sloth and luxury, there would be no danger of his falling into poverty; yet in all probability he would thereby render his condition as unhappy as that of the meanest beggar: he would even lose the taste and pleasure of worldly things by a too frequent use of them, and would most certainly endanger his health by an idle way of living; for it is known by experience, that ease and sleep and want of exercise are the chief causes of most bodily distempers.

Yet of all sorts of idleness that of *artificers* and *labourers* is surely the most blamable, who loiter away that time for which they receive wages; this is a downright cheat upon those whose business they have undertaken; it is robbing them of their money, and may prove more injurious than common robbery, if the affairs they are intrusted with should miscarry through their carelessness. God, who will not suffer the labouring man to be defrauded of his hire, but declares that the cry of such injustice ascends up to him for vengeance, doth as much abhor any fraud that is committed on the labourer's part: the apostle therefore commands christians, that no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter: and surely all eye-servants, all who receive wages for their time, if they squander it away in idleness, are guilty of the greatest fraud: but let them consider what the apostle

there adds, The Lord is their avenger. What shall we say then of those enthusiasts, who neglect and quite lay aside their domestic concerns, their families, their children or servants, or the employments by which they should get their livelihood, under a pretence of purer religion? Such men certainly do not consider the nature of the christian religion, which is to make men holy in their persons and in their lives, but not in the least to take them off from their worldly callings, or from using those talents, which God hath given them for the benefit of the country where they live: nor do they consider the obligation they have to the public society whereof they are members; for hereby they are not only rendered useless to the commonwealth, but they do oftentimes a great deal of mischief to it, by unsettling and subverting other men, and filling their heads with abundance of foolish notions and scruples in religion, which are dangerous to the public peace and happiness. As for the better serving God, by thus leaving their callings, it is a mere pretence; for he serves God best, who doth most good in the world. On the contrary, the man that serves God by continual application to the duty of his calling and state of life, beside the comfort of a good conscience, which is of all others the greatest happiness, such an honest and industrious labourer may entirely depend upon the goodness of God, that he will always take care of him: God will bless and prosper him in the work of his hands, and stir up the hearts of good men to assist and relieve him; and whenever his strength faileth him, through sickness, old age, or misfortunes, let him not doubt but he shall be provided for in such a manner as shall be best for him.

Yet there can be no certainty that God will bless us, except we also *grow in grace;* therefore, says the apostle, give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, *&c.* or improve the grace of God by an industrious and virtuous life, remembering that the more we improve the talent committed to our charge, the more abundance will be given unto us: for it is the gift of God for a man to eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour: such a one reaps the fruit of his pains and industry with a

quiet conscience, a pleasure which the cheat and oppressor are unacquainted with: he is free from contention, from vexatious suits and disturbances; the envy and ambition of others can have no designs, nor take advantage against him, who possesses no more than what he labours for: he is no man's slave or dependant: he is under no temptation to flattery or mean compliances: he needs not cringe nor sneak to the wealthy for his bread, who can live upon his own, and is able in some measure to relieve others: and, what is the greatest blessing, his continual employment keeps him out of the way of those numerous temptations and occasions of sin, to which idle people are always exposed. Let then our endeavours be to improve in all sorts of virtue and piety; whoever bend their minds upon heaven are always advancing in the paths that leads thereto. They do their duty and strive to perform it after a more perfect manner; they take every opportunity of doing good to the bodies and souls of men; are upon their guard to keep their passions under good government, and ready to obey all the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. For, as we shall be answerable for the grace we have neglected, and for not improving what God hath blessed us with, let not the Holy Spirit grieve, who is the author of peace and joy, but surrender ourselves obedient to his call. Certainly, if we understood the value of the least of his favours, and those good thoughts, which pass unregarded, we should esteem them very highly, and not render them of no advantage by stupid negligence. Take care that every spark of a good thought be blown into a flame, that it may produce a suitable practice in our lives and manners. The Lord stands knocking at the door: do not refuse to open, and let him into your heart. God bestows his grace in proportion to our use thereof, and a right improvement of the first degree prepares us for a larger blessing from him: to him that hath, shall be given, and to him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

We are taught that God in justice may, and ought to withdraw his grace, when wilfully neglected: how then shall we escape? for when man is once deprived of

God's grace, he is delivered up to the power of the devil; banished from the sight of God; and bound over to eternal damnation: wherefore it is written, Cast ye the unprofitable servant into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

When an opportunity offers of practising an act of mortification, humility, charity, or patience, &c. we may be prevailed upon by a false persuasion to think that act of virtue cannot be performed at that time; that it is unreasonable, and, though good in itself, may be better adjourned to another opportunity; and so, instead of complying with that holy motion, which solicits us to good, by listening to the deceit of the evil one, we are diverted from it.

SUNDAY XIV. Part II.

IV. *Of the Power of the Devil.*

The scriptures indeed teach us, that the *devil* is always ready to tempt men to sin; yet it is always carefully to be observed, that he can do nothing more but tempt us. He has no power over our persons, or our wills. He *can only set before us baits and allurements;* but we cannot be hurt by them, except we yield to them and choose them. The treachery and corruptness of our own hearts within, is much more dangerous than all the assaults of the enemy from without. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; that is, let no man plead, as an excuse for his sin, that God permitted the devil to tempt him into it. For God, as he cannot himself be tempted with evil, so neither tempteth he any man; neither doth he permit the devil to tempt any one further, than by laying before him such allurements, as it is in the person's power, and it is his duty, and it is the proper trial and exercise of his virtue, to resist. But every man is then, and then only, tempted; then only effectually and sinfully tempted; when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. The enemy of man's salvation can do nothing more, but only entice the covetous with the hopes of gain; puff up the ambitious with

expectations of honour; allure the voluptuous with prospects of pleasure. And, where the mind is not under the power of any of these corrupt affections, the tempter finding nothing in it, his temptations can find no hold, and his power is at an end. Resist the devil, says the apostle, and he will flee from you. The apprehension therefore that many melancholy pious persons have sometimes entertained of the great power of the devil, is erroneous and groundless. But it is a much greater fault in bad men to magnify the devil's power, as they are very apt to do, in order to excuse their own crimes: as if, because the devil tempted them to do ill things, therefore the doing these ill things was a less fault in themselves. Which is an error arising from a very false notion of the devil's power of tempting men; it being nothing more, but like that of wicked men's tempting one another. Yet,

We must not rely too much upon ourselves; we must in cases of conscience apply to those who watch over our souls, the minister and steward of the mysteries of God. We are all apt to be too partial to ourselves, and are too presumptuous when we lean too much to our own apprehensions: but the guidance of our pastor is one of the means God affords for our improvement, and his assistance is very necessary to preserve us from being imposed upon. Remember that the careless and secure live in continual hazard of their own eternal loss; and that, if we would be saved, we must continually watch against all temptations: for the judge of eternal life and death declares, What I say unto you, I say unto you all; watch.

V. *Of Chastity.*

Having considered those *christian* virtues, which in a proper manner respect our *souls;* let us now proceed to those virtues which in a more particular manner regard our *bodies.*

The *first* of these duties is the virtue of CHASTITY or PURITY; because, as the apostle declares, He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. This

virtue consists in abstaining not only from *adultery* and *fornication*, but from all other more unnatural sorts of it, committed either upon ourselves, or with any others; so that it is a due government of those appetites, which God has planted in us for the increase of mankind, which must be confined within the bounds of lawful matrimony; since any other method of gratifying them is contrary to that purity which the gospel enjoins. And even in that state men are not to give a loose to their appetites like brute beasts which have no understanding; but to keep themselves within the modest rules of a marriage state, which being ordained for the begetting of children to be brought up in the fear of God, and for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, so as to keep ourselves undefiled members of Christ's body, nothing must be committed, which may hinder the first reason for marriage; and they who prostitute that holy state to the heightening and inflaming their lust, act contrary to the second reason, which only proposes marriage as the means to subdue lust, and to keep men from any sinful effects of it; for, This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication, that every one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, as the gentiles, who know not God: for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. Yet in seeing, hearing, and touching, many conclude themselves innocent, while free from the lustful deed, and indulge themselves in all liberties short of the last act of uncleanness. But

He that suffers his eyes to rove, and fixes them upon a forbidden object, will be apt to commit adultery, according to that observation of our Saviour, He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And we ought rather to cut off our hand than to be guilty of the least uncleanness therewith; neither must we suffer any evil communication to proceed out of our mouth. He that indulges *any* of his *senses* so far, as to excite any desire of forbidden pleasures, defiles his soul therewith. And they, that would preserve their innocence, must keep their eyes,

their ears, and their hands chaste; that is, they must neither look upon, read, hear, nor touch any thing that may inflame or dispose them in any manner to gratify their sinful passions. For,

When lust is conceived, it brings forth sin; and when we are thus set upon a precipice, corrupt nature pushes us upon the ruin of ourselves. The great neglect of chastity produces much of that irreligion, which prevails in the world; for if early breaches of innocence had not been made by indulging sinful passions, men's minds would not be so averse from entertaining the principles of religion founded in the true reason and interest of mankind: for when the spirit is subdued by the flesh, the obligations of religion begin to lose their force; the means of religion are first neglected, and then the principles of it begin to be questioned, and by degrees men are made such slaves to their lusts that their recovery is desperate, and they are rarely awakened to a sense of their follies, till the miseries of a sad eternity drive them, when it is too late, to repent.

Besides, the sinning against our bodies, as the apostle calls it, exposes us to trouble and vexation of mind; for if the unclean sinner has not cast off the fear of God, a virtuous education, God's all-searching eye, from which nothing can be hid, a dreadful judgment, which nothing can turn away, a devouring fire, which must be his portion to all eternity, will continually awaken him to repentance, and fill him with the horror of his sins. And if he has even stifled the checks of his conscience, the eye of man must still be shunned and avoided; for, as bad as the world is, vice has not the current stamp: measures must be concerted, opportunities must be sought for, our best friends must be imposed upon, and every minute we must tremble for fear of being discovered in our vicious habits. It can hardly be expressed what fears crowd upon young persons seduced by this passion, if there be the least remains of modesty and sense of honour left; nay the anguish of some people's minds upon these occasions has risen so high that they have made away with them

selves to get rid of its torture. The acute and filthy pains and diseases it brings upon the body, the shame and dishonor which is reaped among men, and the base and dishonourable actions which are the too common supports of such crimes, may convince the sinner how dearly he purchases the forbidden pleasures of his lustful appetites. For they, who are under the power of these evil habits, know the force of them; and notwithstanding their serious resolution at some times, the horror of their condition, their uneasiness from the expence that attends their extravagancies, are not able to break their chains. And

To the former mischief we must add the *judgments of God* against this vice of uncleanness; some of the most extraordinary is the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with fire and brimstone from heaven; and the untimely death of Amnon, as also Zimri and Cosbi (who were slain in the very act) should deter the most vicious from the evil of their way; and rather, because God, who seeth all things, and hath made man to be the temple of his holy spirit, declares, by his apostle, That if any man defile the temple of God he shall be destroyed Thus

It is easy to infer the deplorable state of an unclean person, who, being cut off by the hand of divine justice, is *shut out of the kingdom of heaven;* because nothing impure can dwell therein; and consigned to the flames of hell, to be punished for the lustful flames of his flesh. I therefore conclude, that notwithstanding the ill-bred and brutal talk of libertines, than which nothing can be more brutal, except it be their actions; fornication is a crime: because it is to do that which can never be for the good of the world, that it should be universally done; it being impossible, that any particular practice should be warrantable, which, if it became general, would be introductive of disorder and confusion. For that is confessedly contrary to the laws of nature, which if universally practised would interfere with the general peace and happiness of mankind, In cases, where one has as much right to gratify himself as another; whatever would be big

with evils, and productive of misery, if all men were to do it, cannot, for that very reason, be lawful to any man: because any man by so doing contributes his share to the introduction of that misery and disorder.

VI. *Helps to Chastity.*

Perhaps the first motions of our passions may not be under our government, and that we may not be answerable for them; but it is in our own power to stifle and suppress them, to reject them with horror and confusion, and to apply our minds vigorously upon other objects, which will certainly divert them; because the frame of our nature is not capable of dwelling at the same time entirely upon two things. Wherefore we must take care not to indulge any filthy fancies, we must cast away every scene of lust, that represents itself to us, with indignation; and here our security lies in flight, rather than looking the temptation in the face. And as we must govern our thoughts by looking forward, so we must guard against obscene remembrances of what is past; for this is deliberately to delight ourselves with such follies, in which, it may be, we have been at first engaged by rashness and surprize. The greatest sign of a corrupt heart is filthy and unclean discourse: therefore we must take care that our speech does not betray the disorder of our hearts, and especially that our words be free from open lewdness, and from any double meaning; and never to make use of words capable of several senses, with a design to create any unchaste thoughts in those we converse with: nay, we must even avoid conveying any unchaste thought to our neighbour, though we can preserve ourselves from blame in the way of expressing it; for this manner of offending does most hurt, because the poison is gilded and made palatable: whereas downright filthy talk shocks at first hearing, and, being directly opposite to natural modesty, has not so bad an influence upon the hearers. In reports also concerning others, we must not so repeat particulars, as to offend christian modesty; for hereby we contract

too great a familiarity with the idle discourse, and corrupt the minds of the hearers, by entertaining them with such things which they should never learn, but should forget as soon as they chance to hear them.—Filthy conversation is most unbecoming in those who are advanced in years; because it argues a mind extremely depraved, and gives too great countenance to youthful follies. They that resolve to keep their bodies in chastity must not pamper them, nor exceed in meat and drink: for which purpose fasting has in all ages been made use of; and among the many reasons that enforce the practice of it, it is not the least considerable, that it restrains the looser appetites of the flesh, and disposes us to sobriety and seriousness: and when we abate of the rigour of fasting, we should not forget to abstain from such food as is most nourishing to the body; for feeding to the full betrays us to loose mirth, and pampers the unhappy disease of our nature, which it is our chief business to cure and overcome. We must also divert our thoughts from dwelling upon forbidden objects; we must do our duty in our proper callings; for, when we are prosecuting any art or science, when we are employed in any innocent business, or any lawful calling, we are not at leisure to entertain thoughts of pleasure; and, as the appetites of our bodies frequently follow the bent of our minds, that which we most think of we are readiest to do; consequently our great care ought to be to keep ourselves always employed. If we are engaged in a calling, let us prosecute it with diligence and application: if our condition and quality settles us above a profession, let the care of our own estate, and the acquiring such knowledge as may be serviceable to ourselves and our neighbour, challenge a great share of our time: and, by being thus profitably busied, we shall leave no room for the unclean spirit to enter into our soul, and tempt us. The men of pleasure are in the number of those who know not how to spend their days; and chastity can seldom maintain its ground in an idle soil, but is sacrificed to an enemy always within us, and ready to betray us.

Many men have been ruined by presuming upon their own strength; by running themselves into temptations, which they had the confidence to think they could easily master; and sad experience has convinced them of their error; and want of caution has made work for repentance, and petition for greater strength. That man is happy who feareth always; but confidence is the portion of fools. Natural corruption is great, and the violence of our appetite is strong: so that, if we give them all the liberty we lawfully may, they will quickly master us, and snatch at such pleasures as are unlawful. Therefore from a sense of our own weakness, and of the power of temptation, keep at a distance from all such circumstances that may possibly corrupt innocence; trust not yourself in reading books that are framed to raise your passions; to gaze upon pictures that move your desires; to converse with company that delight to show their wit in obscene discourse. Of all passions, love is the most dangerous, because the hardest to be conquered. Therefore all kind of intimacies which may fire our passions are to be avoided, because they insensibly engage our affections; and when they are firmly bent to an object, they seek to gratify themselves by the enjoyment of that object. Nay, friendship, when founded purely upon virtue and merit, and the least supported by sense, may in the issue prove fatal and dangerous: for, though at first we are only charmed with the beauties of the mind, entertained with a good understanding, edified by a modest and virtuous behaviour; yet, by degrees, our admiration and delight in these accomplishments extends itself to the whole person, and the talents of the mind render the body more pleasing and agreeable; so that what begins in the spirit, without care and the grace of God, may end in the flesh and the lust thereof. Therefore use frequent and fervent prayer. This is the way to procure that grace of God which is necessary to preserve us from falling, or to recover us, if we fall. Its frequency will fix our minds upon spiritual objects, and fill us with a sense of God's being present every where; an impres-

sion, which is proper to keep our appetites under government: and its fervour will make worldly pleasures of less esteem in our affections. Therefore we must beg of God, that he would create in us a perfect abhorrence of all impurity; that he would cleanse us from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; that he would set a strict guard on the senses, turn away our eyes, stop our ears, bridle our tongue, and restrain our hands from all uncleanness; that he would give us grace to fly all temptations or opportunities of corrupting our neighbour or ourselves. When impure thoughts are the remains of a bad life, and the punishment of evil habits we formerly contracted, we must endeavour to quench this fire with the tears of repentance for what is past: we must confess before God the impurity of our former lives, and abhor ourselves for those follies whereby we have offended him: we must beg of him to strengthen our resolutions, and in his good time to cast out the remains of the unclean spirit: we must look upon them as a just correction for our former disorders, and submit with patience and humility; saying with Joseph's brethren, We have deserved these things, because we have sinned: and we must the rather apply ourselves to this remedy of prayer, because through its power and strength all other means become successful and effectual.

SUNDAY XV.

I. *Of* temperance *in* eating, *with its ends and rules.* II. *Of* temperance *in* drinking, *with its proper ends and rules.* III. *Of* intemperance, *and the false ends of drinking.* IV. *Of drinking* spirituous liquors, *including the degrees of the sin of* drunkenness, *the great guilt of the strong drinker, the great mischiefs attending it, and the necessity and difficulty of forsaking it, with a caution to young people.* V. *The excuses made by* drunkards *are no reason to continue in their sin.*

I. *Of* temperance *in* eating, *with its ends and rules.*

THE *second* virtue that respects the right government of the *body* is TEMPERANCE in *eating*, *drinking*, *sleep*, *recreation*, and *apparel*; of which several branches of *temperance* I shall discourse in order. And

First, of EATING: We must never indulge our appetites by eating beyond what God and nature has intended for the being and well-being of our bodies; because life and health are the foundation of all other enjoyments; and are therefore of greater value than all other possessions put together, because they are necessary in order to the enjoyment of those possessions.

The principal point of wisdom therefore in the conduct of human life is so to use the enjoyments of this present world, as that they may not themselves shorten that period wherein it is allowed us to enjoy them. And if any part of knowledge deserves a steadier attention than another, and has of all others the justest pretence to be esteemed invaluable, it is unquestionably that knowledge by which, as the wise man expresses it, our days may be multipled, and the years of our life may be encreased. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, was the reasoning of the epicure; but it was very false reasoning, to make the me

lancholy consideration of the shortness of life an argument for debauchery, when that very debauchery is evidently the cause of making man's life still shorter. Temperance and sobriety, the regular government of our appetites and passions, the promoting peace and good order in the world, are, even, without regard to any arguments of religion, the greatest instances of human wisdom: because they are the most effectual means of preserving our being and well-being in the world, and of prolonging the period, and enlarging the comforts and enjoyments of life.

As to the *preservation of life;* it is certain no man can live without eating: for, as physic is necessary to restore us to our former health, so eating is the proper means to cure the hunger that is natural to man, which, if not prevented would prove his mortal disease. Thus

Eating, you have read, is necessary *to preserve* our bodily *health*; and therefore whatever eating is agreeable to these ends of health, and welfare of our bodies, is also lawful; but whoever eats with the sole view to please his taste, or, what is more sinful, to excite lust in his own body, he not only acts against his present but future interest; for by surfeiting and drunkenness many fall into divers diseases and are brought to untimely deaths.

Therefore, let no body engorge himself so as to hurt his health: nor even indulge his appetite with niceness and luxury: for whoever enlaves himself to his palate must be sure to do himself hurt by that which God gives him for his good. Consequently, whatever we find hurtful to our health, or that is found commonly to make or bodies heavy, is to be avoided: for what is fit to nourish some constitutions, would be hurtful to others; and some require such a quantity to preserve their bodies in a regular state, which would draw others from their duty; but most people may judge of this for themselves: temperance obliges every man to abstain from those supports of life, for quality, or quantity, which hurt his constitution. And

They that indulge themselves either in the daintiness or plenty of provisions above their condition and state,

are guilty of intemperance, though it may not be so accounted in those that can afford it. Who hath woe? saith Solomon, who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. What sickness and diseases have some brought upon themselves, merely by their excesses and debaucheries! Diseases which have not terminated with their own lives, but have been entailed upon their unhappy posterity! For if men will run into those excesses, which inflame and corrupt their blood, it is no wonder if a fever or dropsy, or some more fatal distemper, proceed from such a disorder.

How unreasonable then is it to risk the good of the whole man, body and soul, to please the palate? They suffer by diseases and anxieties here; and, without timely repentance, must be punished hereafter for their intemperance. The unreasonableness of this sin appears again, if we consider that its short pleasure is nothing in comparison of its eternal punishment. Is it not then most shameful, that such as call themselves christians, should ever be overtaken with this vice, which levels them to beasts here, and torments them with devils hereafter? Therefore, when you eat, take heed that your hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting; and remember, that we all stand obliged, by the general precept, not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: consequently, such studied and customary pleasing of the appetite as settles the spirit in a sensual frame or a strong turn toward bodily satisfactions, are not blameless. Frequent and high feasting is dangerous for most people: and, though I do not say, that all feasting is unlawful, yet I doubt there are few who, like the rich man in the parable, fare sumptuously almost every day, but must put their minds out of frame, give too strong a bent to sensual good, and abate their delight of spiritual comforts: and what shall such unthinking people expect better than as he did, to want a drop of water to cool their tongues in the next world?

II. *Of Temperance in Drinking.*

We are in the *second* place to avoid all *intemperance* in DRINKING: for, as the end of eating is the being and well-being of life; so drinking has the same end, the preservation of life, the repairing of the spirits, when wasted with thought or labour, and the fitting and preparing men to go through the business of the station in which Providence has placed them: therefore whoever drinks so as to frustrate any of these ends, is guilty of intemperance. Yet it must be observed in general, that the constitutions, ages, and other circumstances among mankind, being so different from one another; nay, the same constitution being so different from itself, according to different times and seasons; there can be no fixed rule or measure in this point; because the same proportion which to one person is not sufficient nourishment, may to another be excess. So that, what proportion is necessary or convenient; what is within the bounds of moderation, and what not, must in a great measure be left to the judgment of every particular person, upon an honest and conscientious regard to these true ends of drinking, as well as eating. God hath planted in every man a natural desire of life; and eating and drinking are the refreshments he has given to support it: but when we speak of the refreshments which nature calls for, we must carefully distinguish between the desires of nature before a habit of intemperance, and after it. Nature, not vitiated with custom or habit, is easy and content with a reasonable and moderate refreshment; but the cravings of nature under the dominion of habit (if we may then call it nature) are unlimited and endless: the more they are indulged, the more eager they are; and never cease, till the senses and understanding are drowned. They are as much a disease as thirst in a fever; and are no more to be gratified than that is; nay, much less; as that is, at most, attended only with temporal death, whereas the certain effect of this is death eternal. Therefore it is very sinful in itself, and very ungrateful and unreasonable in us, to suffer an inordinate

appetite to turn those very blessings to the destruction of life, which God has graciously given us for the preservation of it. Not as if men were bound to live by weight and measure, or were presently sinful if they go beyond the proportions which will barely support life: for the guard and caution which God requires at our hands is not so much to keep to the nice proportions that will barely preserve life, as to keep from that which will weaken and destroy it; and between the proportion that will barely support nature, and those that will overcharge it, there is a compass and latitude, within which we may innocently enjoy the blessings of heaven. God has provided drinks, as well as meats, in the nature of remedies, to revive and refresh the drooping spirits, and to give new life and vigour to the whole frame: but then we must remember to use them as God intended them: not so as to lay aside or supercede our natural strength and vigour, but only to assist nature, when we find her faint and drooping. We must not apply these remedies till nature calls for them; being either in a state of hunger and thirst, or else tired and overcome with thought and labour: nor, when nature does call, must we apply them in larger proportions than she requires, or larger than will fairly answer her needs. And as you have read, that the end of drinking, as well as eating, is to fit and prepare us for the business of the station wherein God's providence hath placed us; it follows, that one great rule and measure in the enjoyment of those blessings is to use and apply them in such a manner, as may make them most subservient to the daily business of our calling and profession. And this we do, when in our ordinary course we make the seasons of drinking, as well as eating, what they ought to be, only short retreats from business, and not the business of life; when we take care, in convenient time, to return to the duties and offices of our calling and to carry with us sufficient understanding and abilities to pursue it; and when what we call the unbendings of our mind, which may be sometimes necessary, are rare, and without any mixture of riot or excess: for whatever is beyond these is an irregular and sinful use of God's creatures.

III. *The Danger of Intemperance.*

By attending to what has been said you will be able to judge, not only what are the proper bounds of sobriety and temperance, and when it is that you exceed those bounds; but also how great and heinous the guilt of that excess is, and its wretched abuse of the blessings of God, not only in forgetting their proper ends, but in perverting them to ends directly contrary; in turning that to the destruction of life, which God gave for the preservation of it; in making that the means of stupefying the spirits, which he designed to raise and refresh them; in transforming ourselves into the state of brutes, by the very helps that he bestows for a more vigorous discharge of the duties and offices of a rational creature; and, finally, in making that the occasion of indisposing ourselves for the business of life, which God graciously gives to support us under it. Yet,

From the loathsome practice of drinking till men are drunk, it is manifest that they have adopted other ends of drinking, than those above recited and warrantable by the law of God. Therefore I shall treat of them in order.

First, A drunkard pretends that he falls into that excess by *good fellowship*, or keeping another company in that wicked practice. It would be well for such a one to consider, that he may, by such a height of complaisance, not only bring himself into a bad state of health (and what is worse, it poisons the soul of a man, always deprives him of reason, distracts his brain, and makes him worse than a beast here, and endangers the loss of his soul hereafter) but as many examples prove, he may be cut off in the midst of a drunken fit.

Secondly, Some excuse the sin under the specious pretence of *preserving friendship*. But give me leave to say, this is a mere drunken excuse; for who in his senses can think that he serves his friend by helping him to ruin his estate, his credit, his life, and his soul? besides, what is more apt to breed quarrels, which are too often attended with blows, and wounds, and murders? for, as

Solomon says, Wine when it is *drank to excess* maketh bitterness of mind, and causeth brawling and strife.

Thirdly, It is also argued by drunkards, that they only drink to *cheer their spirits*, or to make themselves merry. Yet what is the laughter of such, but, as Solomon remarks, madness? They part freely with their reason, health, goods, and reputation in this world, and must render a sad account for such extravagancies in the world to come.

Fourthly, They who pretend that they drink *to put away cares*, plead for the greatest of all follies, because such a practice cannot keep any considerable cares long out of their mind. Was it ever known that any one who was pursued by public justice, ever sought to conceal himself by getting drunk? And is it not an infinitely greater folly and madness, by surfeiting, drunkenness, and riotous living, to endeavour to stifle the checks of conscience, which pursue the sinner to the judgment-seat of Christ, than by repentance to seek for pardon and forgiveness? And should the cares be only of worldly concern, and such as are fit to be avoided and put away; has not God in such cases provided and invited us to cast all our cares upon him; and that he will care for us? And shall we prefer drinking to God's assistance? Therefore, whoever would not be accounted to have quite cast off all religion and reason, must never have recourse to drunkenness in such cases; because it at once rejects the commandment and providence of God, and loads the conscience with a new crime; which, in sober intervals, redoubles all such cares with greater force.

Fifthly, Idle people frequently alledge that drinking is a *recreation*, and serves them *to pass away time*; which, if true, is a caveat against idleness, which is the pretended cause of so great a sin. But, if we survey the drunken part of mankind, it will be found to be a very idle excuse; for God's providence has so stationed every man, that nobody need be idle but through choice: he may always be employed, for the benefit of his own or neighbour's good. And whoever is most at leisure from worldly employment should be more diligent to resist temptations, and to improve the graces and virtues

which God has bestowed upon him, for the edification of his neighbour, and the good of his own soul.

Sixthly, Some so far betray their reason, as to pretend that they get drunk *to avoid reproach* from their drunken companions. Certainly such people forget that drunkenness is a breach of God's commandments; and consequently to be reproached for keeping his commands is so far from being hurtful, that it brings a blessing upon them: for, as our Saviour declares, Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and say all manner of evil against you, for my sake: therefore, says St. Peter, If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye. On the contrary, they who choose to obey man rather than God, by breaking the vow at their baptism to renounce the world, not only run into many evils in this life, but incur God's displeasure, and the danger of everlasting destruction. And again, is it not a degree of madness to yield to the reproaches of the foolish and worst of men, and to be deaf to the well-grounded reproaches of the wise and good? But the greatest consideration of all, to deter men from this false way of arguing, is that dreadful sentence which Christ has pronounced on all them that disobey him through fear of the reproach of men: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. Such is the deplorable end of those, who cast off their sobriety, as they think, to avoid scoffs, reproaches, and it may be injuries from men; yet it is well known that many, who endeavour to frighten others into the sin of drunkenness by such means, are of all others most ready to scorn and despise those that accompany them in the same excess of drinking. One drunkard is always the object of another's laughter.

Seventhly, There are some drunkards, who sot by themselves, and *drink*, as we say, *for drinking sake*; but when a man is so far depraved in his reason, there is more hope of a fool than of him; yet they are generally unwilling to own this. Was not Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, blame worthy, though

in need of refreshment? What then can be the hope of such a one, who sells his health, reason, soul, and his God, for such drink, which is so far from nourishing, that it only serves to destroy him?

Eigthly, The most comon and plausible excuse, which men make to palliate this sin of drunkenness, is the *necessity*, they say, men are under *in driving bargains*, or *in the way of trade*. It is true that such a wicked practice has been introduced by designing and crafty men, who endeavour to defraud or overreach those with whom they traffic; and therefore it is so far from losing any of its malignity, that the very intention of taking an advantage of another, made drunk for that purpose, is a great aggravation of the crime. Besides, how can any one presume so much upon his own head, but that he may be first intoxicated, and then be subject to the very deceit he proposed to impose upon the other? which would be driving a very bad bargain.

Another excuse, which is too common among drunkards, is the plea of custom and general practice; and thence it is pleaded, either that such a life is harmless to the body, or at worst but a sin of infirmity, not sufficient to debar any one from heaven. But it may as well be urged, that there is no heaven, as that drunkenness will not exclude us from it; for drunkenness is numbered by the apostle among those sins, which they that commit *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*.

SUNDAY XV. Part II.

IV. *Of the Degrees of Drunkenness.*

Thus far *intemperance* in *drinking* has been considered in general, without any distinction of various *liquors* by which it is occasioned: but that of *spirituous liquors* deserves our peculiar consideration.

Nothing can be more clear in reason than the quick tendency of those liquors to shorten and destroy life; not only by depraving the appetite, and drawing on a disrelish of wholesome nourishment, as experience shows; but also, as physicians assure us, by hardening the provisions

that are sent into the stomach, and thereby hindering the operations of those helps, which God has provided, for a regular digestion, and for a kindly conveyance of nourishment to every part: besides, the other fatal effects which are charged upon them by physicians; as palsies and apoplexies, from their operation upon the brain and nerves; and of jaundices and dropsies, from their operation upon the bowels. The seeming relief that our spirits receive from the liquors, which we are now speaking of, is not only of short continuance, but frequently runs into phrensy and madness: inflaming instead of comforting; intoxicating instead of enlivening; and as, through such a violent and precipitate consumption, the spirits they give are soon spent; so do they leave the body vapid and lifeless, and under an eager longing after a speedy recruit from those artificial aids, which are only so many steps to the grave, and do, in truth, deserve no better name than a slower kind of poison. And lastly, it cannot be but that they must by the same degrees impair the strength, and enfeeble the constitution, and make the whole man weak and listless; less willing to set about his business, and less able to go through the labour and fatigue of it. Thus it must be in nature; and thus it is daily seen to be in experience and observation. And though persons in the married state may not be enough concerned about the mischiefs they do to themselves, they are to be put in mind, that in them it is not only irreligious, but unnatural and cruel, to have no sense of the weakness and infirmities, which they are entailing upon their innocent offspring; especially, when the temptations lie so much in every one's way; and when the appetite is gratified, and the brain intoxicated, at so easy an expence; and when by a little indulgence the cure becomes so very difficult. Such considerations, one would hope, should of themselves, and without any other inforcements, be effectual warnings to all parents and masters, to use the utmost watchfulness over those who are under their care, that none of them be ensnared by these temptations into the beginning of a distemper, which when begun, is so hard to be cured. Consequently,

Having answered all the common excuses made for this sin of drunkenness, it will be necessary in the next place to show what are the *degrees* of it. And here they deceive themselves, who think that a man is only to be accounted a drunkard, when he is so drunk as not to be able to go, stand or speak: for every lower degree of drinking, that makes a man very dull, ridiculous, or unfit for employment, or full of rage and fury, or makes any change in the man, and which exceeds the natural end of drinking and moderate refreshment, is the sin of drunkenness. This ought to be well considered by those who spend great part of their time in alehouses or taverns, at a friend's or in their own houses, in drinking: for though their constitution be so strong, as to preserve their wits longer than another; yet their crime is not the less, if they drink as eagerly, and employ the same time in the work, as hath made another drunk. Do not reckon that your enjoyments are therefore innocent, because you are able to go away with a tolerable share of reason and understanding, which in many cases is owing only to custom or an uncommon strength of nature; but rest assured, that all indulgencies of this kind, more than what nature fairly requires, and more than what are a real refreshment to body and mind, without prejudice to health or business, are very sinful in the eyes of God, and lay men under the same condemnation in kind, though not in degree, as drunkenness itself does. Therefore whatever we find hurtful to our health, or that is found commonly to make our bodies heavy, is to be avoided.

From the foregoing considerations we may easily collect the *great guilt* of those who, instead of refreshing and relieving nature, abuse and mispend what God in his providence has given us for good ends: and as we must one day account for such abuses, so he that drinks longest has the most of that guilt. To this we may add the mispent time and the drunkenness of those in our company; especially if we strive to make them drunk, and triumph over their infirmity

and value ourselves upon it, we are guilty of a most horrible wickedness. They therefore, who take a pleasure to intoxicate others, would do well to consider the woe which God has denounced against so vile a practice: Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink; that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also! which is a dear price for so short and foolish a pastime.

Thus you have been informed of the sinfulness, the motives to, and the degrees of the sin of drunkenness; a most shameful abuse of God's blessings, and of human nature. And, I have been more particular in describing this vice, as it is a sin of which scarce any condition, age, or sex among us is free; though it is certain that there is no sin more destructive to the understanding, health, reputation, and estate of those that fall into it. According to the different constitutions of men, it produces, in some, a spirit of rage, passion, and cruelty; in others, sullenness, obstinacy, and illnature; and, in most, great folly and indecency in words and actions. It is with regard to the heinousness of this sin that the prophet Isaiah so solemnly denounces woes and judgments against it: Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue unto night, till wine inflame them! and again, Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink! And in the New Testament, the christians guilty of this vice are ranked among the most abominable sinners, and adjudged to the heaviest punishments; even to the exclusion from the kingdom of God.

Let as many, therefore, as have already indulged themselves into a habit, stand still, and consider, that they are in a state of the worst kind of slavery; a slavery of reason to appetite, a slavery of the human to the brutal part. And let them resolve, once for all, to assert the freedom and dignity of their nature, and that, though they have lived like beasts, they will die like men. Let them in a religious way, look back and see how they have abused the blessings of God to

luxury and excess, and with how much goodness he has borne with their provocations and waited for their amendment: and let a sense of his mercy and their own vileness breed in their hearts that godly shame and sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation: or, if neither the force of reason nor religion will do, let the terrors of the Lord persuade them not to trifle away their souls, by continuing in a course, which they know must end so shortly in eternal destruction.

If they say it is a difficult work, the proper answer is, that it is a necessary work: and if men will but think, it can bear no long consideration, whether they shall be uneasy now, or miserable for ever. Where that is the choice, the true inference from the difficulty of the work is, to rouse themselves to equal degress of resolution to go through it; and the more sensible they are of their own weakness, the more earnest ought they to be in their prayers to God to strengthen and assist them. Therefore take heed of giving way to intemperance when it first appears; for it insensibly steals on to higher degrees, and grows upon those who give it admission. I could recount sad instances of persons, in appearance, of the strictest sobriety and regularity, who from small beginnings, not restrained at first, have sunk in sottishness, and been entirely lost to the world and themselves, and consequently to God. It is a vice that eats like a canker, and too often increases with age; which should make young people cautious of the least degree thereof. And its proper antidote is, not to be betrayed into it, but to keep the reigns over the appetites from the beginning; and to accustom it to frequent restraints, that it may know it is always under government, and so be tame and tractable: or, in the language of St. Paul in this very case, to keep under the body, and bring it into subjection; to keep up in our souls the life and power of religion, that our time and thoughts be well employed, that we may not be under the temptation of having recourse to sensual indulgences to pass away our leisure hours. And

To the foregoing we may add another difficulty in

the forsaking the crime of drunkenness, which is an *indolent idle life*. For many, who, as they term it, can live on their substance, or upon credit, abhor the thoughts of work, and give themselves up to drinking, which at last becomes their trade and business. Let them therefore seek for a suitable employ in their way of life, and be diligent in their proper stations; then neither those that must live by their labour, nor others in easier circumstances, will ever spend their time in drinking. It may be, that a good resolution of forsaking the wretched custom of drinking may be attacked by the *persuasions* and even *reproaches* of old pot companions; but they who resolve to become temperate must foresee and expect, and therefore prepare against such temptations; and they will be the better able to resist, by considering how much the everlasting kindness of God is to be preferred to the friendship of men, and whether the reproach of wicked men be so terrible, as that of a guilty conscience, and the eternal confusion of an unrepenting sinner at the last day. In such cases as these, resolve, and say with the royal psalmist, Depart from me, ye wicked; I will keep the commandments of my God.

Therefore give not the least way to any of these temptations; for if a penitent once gives ground, he certainly loses the victory. For by returning to the company of drunken companions, he throws himself into the way of sins, and they seldom fail by force or entreaty to drown their sober resolutions with a flood of excess. Consequently, the greatest security lies in this (as I have said before) to reject the first occasions of this sin; and openly to declare our purposes of living a sober life for the future, that men may be discouraged from attempting any future conquest. For if men suffer themselves to come into the way of excess, or go too near the brinks of it, they will frequently loose the reins, and be plunged in unawares; so that there is no way to be safe and innocent, but to keep a habitual guard and restraint upon the appetite. And together with these considerations, there must be frequent and earnest prayer to God, that he will preserve upon

the mind a lively sense of them, and graciously afford such supplies of grace and strength, as he sees needful, to prevent those evil habits, and to give an effectual check to all such acts of irregularity and excess, as naturally lead to them.

V. *Methods to avoid Intemperance.*

When christians have taken all these methods to avoid intemperance in meat and drink, they will be convinced, that neither *long custom* nor *engaging company* will be able to resist the more powerful grace of God working in a repenting heart. Who would not refrain from drinking by the advice of a physician, when he tells us it would endanger life? and can it be supposed that the dread of death eternal, pronounced against great drinkers, is not sufficient to reclaim them, that duly consider their great danger? For although persons in this condition may be brought to acknowledge, that it had been happy for their body and soul if they had fallen at first into a sober and regular course; yet now, as custom has made such indulgences necessary, and nature can hardly subsist without them, they think that they may innocently go on, and that to part with them is to part with life. To these I would observe, that although custom is very powerful, yet it has not force enough to make that necessary to nature, which of itself is destructive to nature; as all excess most assuredly is, whether with or without the custom. So that what they say is necessary to preserve life is in truth only necessary to quiet a craving and inordinate appetite; the gratifying of which is at that very time the direct and immediate means of destroying life. And as to the present uneasiness, it is no wonder that an appetite unaccustomed to denials, and which has long been gratified to the full, should be so uneasy under the first check and restraint. But if there is steadiness and resolution enough to maintain the restraint for a little time, the appetite by degrees will grow more patient and quiet; and they will find far greater pleasure in governing, than ever they found in indulging it.

Whoever sincerely thus applies his heart to forsake and avoid this sin, cannot fail of a conquest. The impossibility therefore of breaking off a long habit of drunkenness is no excuse, but a proof of a false heart, that rather chooses to continue in sin, than to be at any pains to overcome it.

SUNDAY XVI.

I. *Of* time, *how to be spent.* II. *Of* sleep, *shewing its ends and rules; and the mischiefs of sloth.* III. *Of* recreations, *how and when allowable; of* religious cheerfulness; *the danger of* melancholy; *and the sin and danger of common* gaming. IV. *Of* temperance *in* apparel, *shewing the use of apparel, and the danger and folly of fashions.* V. *Of* christian fortitude *or* patience; *the* comfort *of a* good conscience; *and its necessity and usefulness in all states and conditions of life.* VI. *Of* self-denial *and* mortification. VII. *Of* zeal *both in a good and bad sense, and how to be practised.*

I. *Of* Time, *how to be spent.*

THE time, which God has given us, for working out our salvation, is more valuable than can be expressed; for on the spending thereof depends our happiness or misery to all eternity: which consideration should put us upon all those methods, whereby we may employ it to the best advantage of our souls. There is little of it at our disposal; what is past is slipped from us; the future is uncertain; the present is all we can call our own, and that is continually passing away: in which though the season of working is very short and uncertain, we have an affair of the greatest consequence to secure, that requires the whole force and vigour of our minds, the labour and industry of all our days, and to not be dispatched with any tolerable com-

fort upon a sick bed, nor in the evening of our lives, when our strength and our reason are departing. Therefore, if we persist in an obstinate neglect of the repeated tenders of God's grace, the things that belong to our peace may be hid from our eyes; so that all the time we can reserve from the necessities of nature, and our wordly affairs, which those necessities engage us in, ought to be applied to the noblest purpose, the glory of God and the good and salvation of mankind; assigning to all our actions their proper seasons, and such a portion of our time only as may be necessary for them; whereby time will never lie upon our hands, nor sting us with remorse when it is gone. We are naturally active beings, that must be employed one way or other: we have a mind within us that will be always in motion; and this being the state of that active principle, that constitutes us men, we had need take great care to keep it employed about what is honest, just, and good The soul will find something to work upon, and if it be not employed about what is honest and lawful, it will quickly divert the current of its motion, and exert its activity upon dishonest and unlawful things. Since the fall of man, God hath placed the generality of men in such circumstances, that some honest calling, with diligence and industry therein, is indispensably necessary to their comfortable maintenance: and he hath so taken care to intercept our minds that they may not fly off from the pure acts of religion into their contraries, and that, when they are not better, they may be innocently employed; and hath taken a wise course to confine and bound the soul from making incursions into sinful and prohibited actions: yet not obliging us to be so industrious, as to deny ourselves moderate refreshments or recreations, which are not only useful, but sometimes necessary to our spirits, after they have been stifled in a crowd of business.

II. *Of Temperance.*

Therefore we shall now consider the *third* part of TEMPERANCE, which is SLEEP. This is to be measured by the rule of God's ordinance, who gave us sleep to refresh and support our minds and bodies, when wearied with toil and labour, to repair the decay, and to enable them the better to perform their religious duties. So that it must be always remembered, that this gift of God is for us to profit thereby, and not to make us idle and slothful. Consequently,

Though it is not possible to describe the *limited* time every person may sleep; because, as meat and drink, so sleep must be proportioned to the constitution of every body; yet let no one fall into the crime of Solomon's sluggard, who, after a seasonable refreshment, cries, A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep. Because

It draws us into several *other sins*, as waste of time, filling the body with divers diseases, and dulling the faculties of the soul; and so crosses the end of our creation, which is to serve God in an active obedience, or a constant discharge of our duty in that state of life we are placed in by his providence. And

Beside the sinfulness of *sloth*, it will cover a man with rags: let him be in what state of life soever, poverty will overtake him, till he is destitute of convenient clothing. And as sleep is a kind of death, he that indulges therein to excess may properly be said to lay violent hands on himself, and to anticipate God's appointed time. Thus also

III. *Of Temperance in Recreations.*

To what has been said of sleep, we may add the *fourth* part of TEMPERANCE, which is RECREATION: for we must not turn our physic into food, and make that our business, which should be only our diversion. For though a serious christian may sometimes, and at some seasons, use the common games, for the relaxa-

tion of his mind, and to oblige and divert his company; yet every sober man is to take care that this liberty does not exceed the bounds of an innocent recreation: for instance, that he do not set his affections too much upon it, or play with such concern as to be put into a passion at his bad success; that he sit not too long at it, nor come to it too frequently; that he always prefer his necessary business before his diversions; that he so order his recreations of this kind, as that they render him the more fit to spend his other time the more usefully; and lastly, that he play not for money, but for diversion; at least for no more money than what he can very well lose, without the least discomposure of mind, and without the least prejudice to his family or estate. Thus far, I say, and with these restrictions, to use play is innocent enough. Our recreations also must be short, and refreshing, and must never be permitted to steal away our minds from the duties of our calling and election in Christ Jesus. For so far as our sports exceed the measures necessary and convenient for our bodies, they are unwarrantable incroachments upon our religion and calling.

Here is the misery: there is a sort of men who even make a trade of gaming, whensoever they can find out company to their purpose; but whosoever makes this his way of living has a sad account to make to God. Can there be a worse consumption of our time, and a greater abuse of our talents, than to put them to no greater use than throwing of dice, or turning a pack of cards, especially when it is attended with indecent and impetuous passions of all sorts, execrable oaths, imprecations, lies, cheats, and brutish quarrels and contests? And, as if damning their souls were not enough, how many estates have been broken and ruined? how many families, wives and children, hath it reduced to the extremest degree of poverty and contempt? nay, to an untimely end; whether by poison, or a quarrel, or the gallows? And here it may be observed, that, of the several kinds of gaming, the lowest and most vulgar seems to be that of *laying wagers;* and it is not only low and vulgar, but frequently dirty and knavish. When a matter of fact is disputed,

laying a wager upon it may indeed serve to make an impertinent man pay the penalty of his ignorance; but a generous good-natured man (much more a christian) will always scorn to take such an advantage. When neither party has any certainty of what they dispute about, then a wager is folly in both: and when it is about events that depend on Providence, or what is ignorantly called *chance*, it becomes a kind of presumption bordering on madness.

And as we are not to propose any other end to our recreations, than a bare relaxation of our tired spirits, by moderate refreshment; so our great care in them must be always to use them only at such times when they cannot properly be said to fall in with any part of our duty to God, or our neighbour; because time is given us, in the first place, to make our calling and election sure. So that they are highly culpable, who spend whole days and nights at cards and dice, or other idle pastimes; or through any avaricious temper make a trade of gaming, and so cheat; and, when provoked, stain their souls with fury, rage, swearing, and cursing, as woeful experience often shows. Such a gamester stakes his soul, which is of too great value to be ventured at such a rate: and, instead of recreation, loads himself with the greatest vexations; for the fears and desires of the covetous, and the impatience and rage of the angry man, are more real pains than the most laborious work in the world. Yet

We should endeavour also to keep up a constant *cheerfulness* of spirit. They disgrace religion, who pretend that it is an enemy to mirth and cheerfulness, or imagine it to be a severe exacter of thoughtful looks and solemn faces, or that men are never serious enough till they are sullen, or shut up from all company and recreation. Let men say what they will, those hours which are wasted away in indulging an idle sullenness or a moping melancholy, are no less placed to our account, than those which fly away unperceived in unthinking mirth and gaiety. It is the same thing, as to all religious intents and purposes, whether our time is mispent in vanity, or in anguish and vexation of spirit. It has been a great artifice of the devil to possess the minds of unthinking

men with an opinion, that religion is a sour, morose, ill-natured thing, an enemy to whatever is pleasant and cheerful; and that whoever engages in the practice of it must from that instant renounce all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. But as the devil is the father of lies, it is no wonder that he sets every thing before us in a false and deceitful light; he knows that there is such a beauty and comeliness in religion, as no one can behold but with love and admiration; and therefore he endeavours to draw a veil over its lustre, and to raise in our minds frightful ideas concerning it: and too many are misled by such false and unjust representations. Our Saviour was so far from giving religion a gloomy appearance that the first miracle which he wrought was at a scene of festivity, where he turned the water into wine: and he, who gave and exemplified the strictest rules of life, gave a sanction to the innocent comforts and refreshments of it. Again, a cheerful and contented mind is a great blessing of life; for without, nothing in this world can make us happy: and where shall a man obtain this, but in the practice of religion? that will teach him to resign his will to God, to submit to all the dispensations of his providence, and to be patient and easy, cheerful and satisfied, under every disappointment and trouble he meets with; as knowing that God is the sovereign disposer of all things; and so long as we keep within the bounds of sobriety, and do not sally out into malicious, scurrilous, or profane jesting, our religion does not only wink at our mirth, but approves thereof. Cheerfulness is nature's best friend, removes its oppressions, enlivens its faculties, and keeps the spirits in a brisk and regular motion, and renders it easy to itself, and useful and serviceable to God and our neighbour; dispels clouds from the mind, and fears from the heart; kindles and cherishes in us generous affections, and composes our nature into such a temper, as is of all others the most fit to receive religious impressions and the breathings of the holy spirit. Whereas *melancholy* naturally represses the spirit of God, and disturbs its working within us; overwhelms the fancy with black vapours; clouds and darkens the understanding; distracts the thoughts, and

makes them wild, roving, and incoherent; makes them unfit for prayer and consideration, and renders them deaf and inattentive to all the good motions and inspirations of the holy spirit.

IV. *Of Temperance in Apparel.*

The *last* part of TEMPERANCE, is APPAREL: for to be temperate in dress becomes us as we are rational creatures, but more especially as we are members of the christian church; forasmuch as we are strictly obliged to avoid all kinds of excess, and in particular to put on modest apparel. If men are guilty of excess, the dignity of their sex increases the fault, and makes it unpardonable: nature having designed men for the noblest employments, they undervalue themselves in studying dress and ornament; and betray such a degeneracy of spirit, as exposes them to scorn. Besides, this extravagancy in either sex is destructive of the public welfare. The lawful use of apparel appears, by considering the ends for which clothing is appointed; which is a covering from shame, to defend us from the injuries of the weather, and to distinguish the orders and degrees of men: which ends, if they were attended to, many would reduce themselves into a homelier dress, who make so gay an appearance in the vanity of rich habits, and strain both their purses and consciences to purchase them.

The *first* design of apparel having been, as we read in Genesis, to *cover the nakedness* of our first parents, whose shame was the effect of the sin by which they brought death into the world; we should be so far from delighting in apparel becoming us, that it should be a constant check against all other offences, and teach us never to covet better apparel than will serve to cover us decently. Yet many christians will comply with every *fashion*, and suit their dress to all the changes, insomuch that by dress and habit there is no distinguishing an honest woman from a common prostitute: but with discreet christians it ought to be otherwise; they are bound to abstain from all appearance of evil, to avoid all approaches toward it, and deny themselves the use of such orna-

ments, and forbear such gestures, which give ground of suspicion to the censurer, or whereby themselves may be tempted to pride, or their admirers to the lusts of the flesh. But they are always guilty of excess in their apparel, who have neither quality nor any good design to justify the wearing thereof; who propose no other ends but to set off their *beauty*, or to make such a figure as may deceive the world into a false opinion of their *greatness* and *honour*, to which they have no title: and they are as much exalted with it, in their own vain conceit, as if they had gained some real worth or power; as their haughty looks, their insolent and scornful behaviour plainly show. This verifies the wise man's observation, A man's attire, excessive laughter, and gait, show what he is. Gay apparel has ever been observed to corrupt men, putting those upon extravagancies, who are otherwise sober and industrious; and though some are so much masters of themselves as to retain their innocence with it, yet frequently it tempts to sin, kindles lustful desires, and is too often worn for that very design. The over curious in adorning the body commonly neglect their better parts; though they shine in the eyes of men, their soul remains in darkness, in gross ignorance of their duty, or defiled with pride and all manner of uncleanness. They not only employ their thoughts, but their time also, in this vanity; they spend so much time at their glass, or in the dressing room, or in making a show of themselves to company, that there is none to spare for performing the offices of religion and virtue.

Loose dress is destructive to many christian virtues; such as charity, which suffers much thereby. Those who are so much taken up with love and admiration of themselves, have little disposition to consider the straits and hardships of other men; they can easily overlook their neighbour's poverty, and despise him for it; the most distressed object moves no compassion in them: but under this sense they can hide themselves from their own flesh: nay, it is well if they do no more than so; for such as will pinch their bellies, and starve their families, to feed this vanity, are too often known to lie in wait and catch the poor, when they can draw them into their

net by any indirect means. They who think rich apparel becomes them well, and that much happiness consists in it, having no estates to support it, will stick at no villainy whatsoever to gratify their pride. What shall we say of those who run deep into the tradesmen's books, without any possibility of paying them; to which is owing the ruin of many families? Is not their dress a load of sin? What can be said by way of excuse for those, who are fine at their neighbour's cost, by means that are not very easily discovered; where bribery, extortion, breach of trust, and deceit in dealings, must bring in the supplies for their maintenance in apparel? This must of necessity bring many into straits and difficulties, who are immediately taught by the devil to lay the blame of their credit being sunk and lessened by this kind of profuseness, upon the times, the decay of trade, and scarcity of money: as the times of the greatest plenty can witness; hence it is impossible for art and industry, or the most gainful returns of trade, to answer all the unreasonable demands of luxury and pride.

The *second* end of apparel being to *defend us from the injuries of the weather*, we ought only to wear such clothing as shall be necessary to keep us from cold, and preserve the health of our bodies. They therefore are guilty of intemperance in apparel, who take such pride in their clothes, as, by regarding the fashions, to neglect, and even prejudice their health: in which cases clothing is so far from being a benefit, that it hurts the body. But lest it should be understood that I would countenance those, who, out of a covetous temper of hoarding up riches, deny themselves the conveniencies of life, and contend it is utterly unlawful to comply with the innocent and becoming fashions of their country, or to lay out any thing more upon clothing, than just what is necessary or sufficient to clothe them; who arraign those of pride and wastefulness, who put on ornaments suitable to their rank and quality, and such as their circumstances in the world will easily and honestly afford them: I say, these pretended scrupulous notions are not the fruits of christian instruction, but the signs of a narrow spirit; so that, when they are taught for religious doc-

trines, they are no better than superstitious impositions, like those of the judaising christians, who said, Touch not, taste not, handle not: putting a restraint upon men in those things which God and the laws of their country give them liberty to enjoy. Yet we must take care, lest, under the pretence of liberty, we go beyond our rank and degree, and despise those, who either through choice refuse to come up to the same excess, or whose circumstances will not allow them to do it: we must also shun all those kind of dresses, as have a natural tendency to raise lascivious and wanton thoughts.

We have said, that the *third* design of apparel was intended *to distinguish the orders* and *degrees* of men: and this both in respect of sex and quality: for all nations have assigned a distinction of clothing between man and woman: even as the Lord commanded the Jews, that one sex should not wear the dress of the other. And, in regard of men's quality, we may observe, that it is not blamed, but asserted, that they who wear gorgeous apparel live in king's courts. So they who excuse the vanity of rich apparel by their birth and quality, who are in king's courts, who are about their prince, or have derived honours from him, have the best pretensions to it: but the noblest persons ought to consider, that there are many better ways than this of distinguishing themselves, and commanding the respect and observance that is due to them: there are many duties which lay claim to their wealth; many great and generous actions are expected from them, as they are christians: they are bound to remember, that by a solemn vow at their baptism they renounced the pride of life under the name of the pomps of the world: though pride is not the necessary effect of rich ornaments; for many wear them with no other design than to keep up their rank and dignity, that they may not appear covetous, nor seem to affect a greater pride in going beneath their station. Men and women, in every state and condition of life, should never strive to exceed their fellows, much less their superiors, in the way of dress: for, if we believe every man's portion to be allotted by God's providence, and that all things shall work together for good

to them that fear him, we shall easily be satisfied with the condition he has put us into, and shall like every thing that is suitable or belonging to it: for what God has appointed must be the best for us; and, how mean soever it be, we have no reason to be ashamed of it, since he is the great Lord and sole disposer of all things that we can enjoy. Mean and plain apparel is as becoming in a low estate, as a richer dress would be in a higher station: he who disdains the one would be as proud as of the other. Therefore let us not mind high things, but let us condescend to men of low degree; that is, conform our way of living to our circumstances: be content, and boast not of gay clothing or raiment. Consider there is nothing in apparel to value ourselves upon; it answers well the uses which God designed it for, to defend us from the weather, or to cover our nakedness; but it is folly to boast of that which owes its value to our shame, weakness, or natural necessities.

Now, to prevent any misapplication of those several rules of temperance, I must observe, that they in no wise countenance the vice of *avarice* or *covetousness:* for whoever denies his body the necessaries of life, suitable to his station, ability, and quality, sins against the goodness of God, by robbing his back to fill his purse. The like may be urged against the slavish life of those who moil and toil day and night; and for the sake of what they never enjoy themselves, nor have any heart to do any good with, deprive their bodies of their requisite nourishment, competent time of sleep, and necessary recreation. Therefore the covetous man is not a temperate man; because it is not a regard to the duty of temperance, but an inordinate desire of riches, which is the root of all evil, that makes him refrain, and to sacrifice his health, peace, conscience, life and soul, to save his purse.

SUNDAY XVI. Part II.

V. *Of Christian Patience.*

To the forementioned virtues of temperance we may add those other duties of christian resolution, *patience* and *self-denial.*

Christian FORTITUDE or PATIENCE is that virtue, which qualifies us to bear all conditions, and all events, by God's disposal incident to us, with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, which such dispositions and affections of heart, and with such external deportment and practice of life, as God and good reason require; that is, with a thorough persuasion that nothing befalls us, but either by the permission or direction of Providence; a firm belief that all occurrences, however contrary to our desires, are both consistent with God's attributes, and conducive to our good; a full trust and dependance on him, either for strength to enable us to bear our afflictions, or for a seasonable removal or mitigation of them; abstaining from all discontented complaints and murmurings against Providence; from all malicious and revengeful thoughts against the instruments of our sufferings; and from all unworthy and irregular courses, to extricate ourselves from them; so that suffering according to the will of God, we may commit the keeping of our souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. For this duty is exercised in bearing present evils, or waiting for future good, and the future blessed state of immortality. It is a disposition of mind, which keeps us calm and composed in our frame, and steady in the practice of our duty, under the sense of afflictions, or in the delay of our expectations. And it is this patience with which Christ exhorts his disciples to possess their souls, after he had foretold them the suffering and dangers they would be exposed to in the course of their ministry and christian warfare; and in them instructs us, that in every circumstance that tends to discompose us, we must always shew ourselves men, by permitting reason and grace to have the upper hand.

Diseases, pains, loss of friends, ingratitude, disappointments in our affairs, and all the various troubles to which man was born, fall to the lot of the good as well as the wicked. For, as the deceitfulness of riches blinds men's eyes, the pleasures of life steal from their understandings: power is very apt to lead them into ambition and tyranny; plenty into intemperance; and continued prosperity, into a careless spirit, and into a neglect and forgetfulness of God: so afflictions of all kinds, though for the present they are grievous, have naturally a tendency in the end to lead men into sober thoughts and considerate counsels; to wean them from the numerous vanities and follies of the world; and to amend the habit and temper of their minds, by addicting them to the expectation of a better and more lasting state. Do not therefore conclude, because God suffers you to fall into many difficulties and afflictions; because you are pressed with hard and pinching circumstances; because you are visited with sad and grievous losses, or with long and painful sickness, or with the death or miscarriage of your nearest relations, or the like heavy misfortunes: do not, I say, conclude from this, that God is angry with you, or that he hath no kindness for you. The best of his children he thinks fit to exercise in this way, for the trial and improvement of their virtue, for the exercise of their patience, for the correction of their faults, and for purging them, that they may bring forth more and more fruit, till they arrive at eternal rest and glory: which glory we can no more inherit without patience, than without an unfeigned faith and repentance. Yet

We are convinced by observation, that few bear afflictions with due resignation; for the man who is touched in his reputation declares how willingly he would submit to any other affliction that could befall him, but is not able to bear injurious reflections: the man who is confined to his bed, complains that his distemper makes him impatient and discontented, and prevents the practice of several good works he designed, if free from his illness. Again, we may observe a woman with a perverse husband, and disobedient chil-

dren, declaring that she would suffer willingly any other affliction, except that which lies upon her; which she imagines can only serve to increase her misery both in this and the next world. And indeed, every body seems willing to exchange their present cross for another, and must think themselves unhappy in the particular sort of their sufferings; which discontent renders their minds always unquiet, and their management unreasonable: for without doubt God sends or permits that affliction; it does not spring out of the ground; we must not determine what God ought to do to us. It is able, in truth, to draw tears from one's eyes seriously to reflect upon the sad, deplorable, calamitous condition of a great part of mankind in this world; to exhibit to our minds that dismal scene of things that are every day presented to our eyes: here are some languishing under a long and tedious distemper, unfit for all the functions, and incapable of any of the enjoyments of life: others roaring out for the extremity of torture they suffer from the stone, or gout, or an ulcer or a broken limb, or some such other tormenting accident; others mourning for the loss of a dear parent, on whom they depended; on the death of a child, who was the stay and comfort of their age: others fretting for the disgraceful circumstances they are fallen into from a high fortune: others even heart-broken for the poverty to which they are reduced through the profuseness of their lives, or the misadventure of trade, or the ruins of a fire, or the calamities of a war: others groaning under the whips and stings of an awakened conscience, being filled with horror and despair, from the sense of their crimes, and the apprehensions of the vengeance of God in the other world. Yet we ought not to prescribe to him the particular cross he shall lay upon us. Such thoughts must be banished from our mind, and we must receive the cross which he sends us, with submission; and though it be not what we would have chose for ourselves, we must obey: it is sufficient that it comes from God. The meaning is, God hath so balanced and mixed adversity and prosperity together, that a man upon a review of the

whole, upon a full and impartial estimate of things, should have no just ground to arraign the conduct of Providence; but shall find he has had more good fortune than he deserved, and as much as was beneficial to him; and no more ill-fortune than was necessary to correct his faults, moderate his affections, and exercise his virtues. Therefore

Let us be careful that the exercise of our patience be *lasting;* that it be a fixed habit, and not by starts; in great as well as in less trials; and in small as well as in great; for sometimes impatience breaks out upon trifling occasions, after long patience in great and shocking calamities; and let it be unconquerable in uncommon trials, as well as in those to which we have been used. The great difficulty is to act and think in some measure above the world, while poverty exposes us to the neglect and contempt of it; to scorn to build our fortunes on the ruins of our probity; to despise the little injuries we receive, and to pity the little men that do them; little I mean in themselves, and in the eye of reason; though they may be very great in the eye of the world, and perhaps much greater in their own eyes. A good conscience is a perpetual source of joy and comfort; it gladdens the heart, cheers and refreshes the soul, and fills the mind with a constant serenity and cheerfulness, which is infinitely to be preferred before the noisy mirth of fools and madmen. He that is possessed of this inestimable jewel, has a treasure greater than all the riches of the world; a treasure, which he always carries about with him, and which neither the malice of the devil, nor the wickedness of men can rob him of; and so long as he retains this fund of joy and comfort, he can never be truly miserable, unless he is wretchedly wanting to himself.—For as a good conscience gives a relish to all outward enjoyments, so it abates and takes off the edge of the sharpest afflictions; and not only enables a man to bear up under present evils, but fortifies him against the dread and apprehension of future ones: it arms a man with courage and resolution, and gives him such a firmness and presence of mind, and makes him able

to endure the greatest shock. Happy will it be, if our Master finds us in such a frame at his coming, whenever it shall be that he calleth us to render an account of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Such patience, as this, is its own reward; and *impatience* is its own punishment; because it lays aside the man, and sets up the brute, or the devil: leads us to act a foolish or an outrageous part, and, instead of abating, increases our sufferings. Our burden is lightened by patience: whereas impatience, which pierces the heart through with so many sorrows, doubles it. Complaints, murmurings, impatience, and discontent offend God, and rob us of the profit and advantage of our sufferings for his name. They that submit with resignation, their virtue increases; but they that murmur, their sufferings only serve to increase those that are reserved for them in the world to come. Therefore bear with patience and do not make yourself doubly miserable. It is scarce credible, that any man can be hardy enough to complain against God, or dare to find fault with that providence he ought to adore and be thankful for: yet some insinuate that he is severe; that he seems to abandon them; that they do not deserve the treatment they receive: and some carry their discontent so high, as to break out into desperate expressions. Such people can never be convinced, that God is a kind and indulgent father, who chastises his children for their good; that he is a charitable physician, who prescribes bitter and distasteful remedies for the recovery of their health; and consequently live without faith, without which there is no salvation. So the impatient man becomes his own tormentor, and perplexes himself by needless discontents and inquietudes; he becomes insupportable to himself, robs his own soul of peace and quietness, and introduces passion: under which ill habit of mind we should not presume to reply, or undertake any thing of consequence; because it clouds and renders the understanding incapable of acting for our good.

In such cases let the smoke fly off, the troubled water settle and you will discover what reason requires from

you. When you find your anger boil, retire, change the discourse, or impose upon yourself in an obstinate silence. There are some who take things so much to heart, and so highly resent the least thing that has been done against them, that they make forgiveness a difficult work; whereas it is both our duty and interest. All trifles ought to be despised; for, if we dwell upon them, our imagination will increase them; and the more we think upon them, they will appear the more intolerable. Patience is the only means to disarm this enemy; besides, it pleases and honours God, and keeps us in a posture to receive a deliverance from our troubles, or the accomplishment of our hopes.—Those, that are continually complaining that things run cross; that the world is much worse than it should be; have very great reason to complain, that there is one individual person in it much worse than he should be; who cannot bear the accidents of life with tolerable patience, nor look upon mankind with common charity. Men are uneasy in themselves, and then shift the blame off from themselves upon the persons they converse with, and the times and places they live in.

VI. *Of Self-Denial.*

The other duty above mentioned is Self-Denial, or a willingness to quit all earthly comforts, even life itself, and to undergo the greatest hardships, though they end in death, rather than out of a fondness to this world to do any thing contrary to the religion of Jesus Christ; that faith which was once delivered to the saints. Because this is the only method to secure the blessings of eternal glory; for, if we deny him before men, he will deny us before his Father, who is in heaven choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: which scripture in a larger sense comprehends the denying our innocent appetites, whenever they prove to be the means to hinder our practice of the greater acts of mortification.

The denial of our innocent appetites is instrumental in mortifying our sinful desires and disobedient affections; because, if we gratify them in all things, where we lawfully may, they will by long use and indulgence acquire a greater power over us, and then it may be a difficult task to deny them any thing: for our appetites make no difference between an innocent and a sinful enjoyment, they are only moved by pleasure; so that if we will be sure to conquer and subdue them in all instances that are sinful, we must take care that they grow not strong upon us in any particulars. And therefore it is represented in scripture, by forsaking father and mother, by hating wife and children, by denying brother and sister, by quitting all that we have, by laying down our lives, and bearing the cross of Christ. And

We are engaged by many and great *advantages* to practice this christian virtue; for God hath promised to assist and support us by his holy spirit in the discharge of this difficult duty; he hath been graciously pleased to assure us, that he will reward the practice of it with greater degrees of eternal happiness: and nothing can be more reasonable, than to part with things of small value, for things infinitely greater. Moreover, the blessed Jesus, who requires it from us, hath given us the greatest example of self-denial that ever was, and that in pity and kindness to us, and wholly for our benefit and advantage: that, when we have paid the tribute of nature here, he may receive us through the gate of death into the mansions of eternal bliss hereafter.

VII. *Of Christian Zeal.*

Having laid before you the respective duties toward God, *our neighbour*, and *ourselves*, together with their opposite sins and the means to practise the one, and to avoid the other; I shall now exhort you to be zealous in the faith, and to be continually labouring to enrich your souls with virtue, and as much as in you lies to root out all vice, not only from your own hearts

but wherever it is in your power either by example or authority. This is our duty; yet, like all other christian virtues, it being often misused, I shall endeavour to describe what that zeal is so necessary to all men. *Zeal* is an earnest concern for, or against something, and a close pursuit of it; and is in its own nature indifferent like the rest of the passions: but *good* or *bad*, according to the object and degree thereof. It is used in the holy scriptures, in a *good* sense, when applied to those things where the honour of God and the salvation of men's souls are concerned; but in a *bad* sense, when applied to a furious spirit of persecution, and to such contentions and divisions as produce wrath or envy. So *christian zeal* is right in respect of its object, if what we contend for be certainly and considerably good, and what we oppose be certainly and considerably evil; if the measure and degree of it be proportioned to the good or evil of things, for which it is concerned; if it be pursued and prosecuted by lawful and warrantable means; since no zeal for God and his glory, or for his true religion, will justify the doing of that, which in itself is evil or unjust. Thus

Zeal becomes *evil*, when we violently contend for any doctrine that is erroneous, and are more earnestly concerned for the externals of religion, than for solid and real goodness, which they are designed to work in us; when it betrays us to the breach of any of God's laws, in order to promote his glory and create divisions, and schisms in the christian church, as also when we prosecute even truth itself, without that meekness and charity, which are a part of the character of the good christian. And we have the more reason to take care how we govern our zeal, because that Moses himself, distinguished for his meekness, when zealous for God, at the waters of Meribah, was so provoked, that he spoke unadvisedly with his lips; so that if our zeal for God be not well tempered, we may, with that great prophet, break the tables of the law, and throw them out of our hands with zeal for their preservation.

Our zeal should be shown, not by fire and faggot,

and excommunications threatened against those we suppose to pervert or mistake the word of God; but by earnest prayer to God for their conversion, that he would bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived: by showing such kindness to their persons as may dispose them to receive the impressions of those arguments, that we should offer with meekness for their amendment: by abstaining from all reproachful and bitter reflections, which prejudice them against the truth: by exercising all acts of charity toward them, which is the only moderation due to those that differ from us in religious matters, without yielding any necessary points of faith, by too much complaisance; for though we should behave to them as brethren in kindness and gentleness, yet we must not imitate their ways, but be followers of the Lord, and oppose firmness in the faith to their errors. Yet when they lie under the censures of the church, we should keep at a distance from their conversation; which is but reasonable, that when all methods have been used for their recovery, we may be careful to avoid any infection. Yet rigorous corporal punishments, and infliction of death upon these accounts, appear contrary to the spirit of the christian religion, and inconsistent with many of the chief principles thereof; seeing that the gospel of our Saviour engages us to show meekness to all men, and universal love and good will even to our enemies. From which it must follow, that no difference of religion, nor any pretence of zeal for God, can justify a spirit full of rage, malice, and vengeance.

SUNDAY XVII.

I. *Of* death, *being common but uncertain as to time, and advantageous to all men.* II. *How we should* number *our days: and of* repentance *and* habitual preparation *for death.* III. *Of the* hindrances *of a good* preparation, *with advice for the disposal of our worldly affairs, a disregard of the world, patience in sickness, submission to God's will, and of the assistance of a minister.* IV. *In what the death of the* righteous *and the* length of man's life *consist; including the advantages of* piety, *and the disadvantages of a* long life. V. *Of the means to* improve *our lives, and of a* middle state. VI. *The several reasons why death is* terrible *both to the natural and to the spiritual man; and why many desire to live long in this world.* VII. *Of the height of* christian perfection, *and the danger of delaying our* turning to God.

I. *Of Death.*

NOW all these instructions, by which I have endeavoured to enforce the *Whole Duty of Man* (which, as you have been taught under their particular heads, consists in a lively faith in God the Father through Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, and a perfect obedience to his commands, revealed to mankind in the gospel) are intended as so many guides through the rugged paths of this troublesome and sinful world to the confines of eternal glory; and as so many timely supports against the anxiety, sorrow, and temptations, which attend mankind, when death calls us from the stage of this life; so now observe that

DEATH is no more than a separation of the soul and body: the soul returns into the hands of God its creator, and the body to dust, of which it was made; not that by dying we cease to live; for our souls are of an im-

mortal nature, and our bodies shall be raised incorruptible. This death is entailed on all by our first parents, for in Adam we all die; it is a sure debt which we must all pay in our corrupt state; and the daily examples of mortality are constant proofs that death is not far from every one of us: for, as the Psalmist observes, the days of our age are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away and we are gone! This is the *ordinary* period of human life, when it is spun out to the greatest length: and therefore within this term we may with reason expect to die. Yet

How much of this time we shall run out; how soon or how late we shall die, we know not; for we see no age exempted from death: we see some expire in the cradle; others in the heat and vigour of youth; and others outliving their families to a decripit old age; and a great many are often surprised by death, when they least think thereof: this should convince us, that the time of our death is a secret belonging unto God, and therefore hidden from our sight. Not that God has determined how long every man shall live, by any absolute decree; that is restrained by no condition; yet if a sparrow does not fall to the ground without our Father, much less shall man die without his appointment or permission; a special providence appears as well in the death as in the birth of every one that is born of a woman. So we are taught that no man can destroy himself, but by God's leave; nor can any disease kill, but when God pleases; neither can any mortal accident befall us without God's appointment. The plague, the pestilence, the famine, and the sword fulfil the will of the Lord, and, by his particular commission, execute his vengeance upon the obstinate and the wicked doer; and, on the contrary, the most savage rage and fury of man cannot, without God's particular permission, take away our lives.

This lays us under a perpetual obligation to serve God, and to please him in all our ways; this secures us from all dangers, and the fears thereof: and this is an assurance of our hope, that God will hear our petitions,

when we pray for the deliverance of ourselves or our friends from danger, trouble, sickness, or temptation. This should make us as willing to part with this veil of flesh as to seek for a remedy to remove a film from the eyes of our body. Was death more intolerable than the afflictions which daily pursue human nature; were the comforts and pleasures of this life more desirable and happy in their consequences than what God has reserved for his servants, and his children by adoption in Christ Jesus; both the rich and the poor, both the easy and heavy laden, might pray for a longer continuance upon earth: but through death and the grave we must pass, before we can enjoy perfect happiness.

Thus God's *wisdom* and *goodness* is wonderfully displayed in reserving to himself the *number of our days*; for such a knowledge in man could be no means of making his present state more conformable to the gospel of Christ; where the heart is so hardened against those means of salvation which God has appointed, when it is not sure of living a moment longer: and should God vouchsafe to reveal to any one, that his life is confined within the narrow bounds of one short night, or limited to the end of fifteen years, it would chill the blood and sink the spirits of the strongest man; and the pleasures and comforts of his remaining life would be overcast, as of one under sentence of death without hopes of a reprieve. And,

Should *young men*, who are cut off in the midst of their hopes to live a long life, know the certain time of their death, they being certain that twenty or thirty years were to be the extent of their life, they would never trouble themselves in the pursuit of trades and learning, or concern themselves with this world any more, than just to live so long therein. This would be a certain means to thin the nurseries of arts and sciences: none would toil and labour, did they know that the product thereof would so soon be taken from them by death; nor is it reasonable to think, that any parent would be at so great expence as attends a child's instruction in the languages, arts, and sciences, if he knew that he must die as soon as he had attained knowledge in them. In a

word, such a knowledge of the certain time of our death would be an insupportable mischief to all communities, and destroy half of the world, by destroying the industry and improvement of half mankind. But

The searchers of unrevealed knowledge urge, that these inconveniencies to society are superceded by the great advantages which may follow from a certain knowledge of the precise time of our death: as namely, say they, it would prompt many young men to spend their days in piety and devotion, and to make the next world their care; and thereby secure the salvation of many thousands, who are now eternally ruined (not by want of this knowledge, but) by youthful lusts and vanities. But

Is not this arguing like the rich man in the gospel, who being in torment, begged that Abraham would send Lazarus from the dead to persuade his brethren to repentance? and should not they therefore receive Abraham's answer? They, who live in this world, are taught by God's holy word, that their time is short in this world; that man that is born of a woman has but a short time to live; and when death brings them before the judgment seat of Christ, that they shall be judged according to their behaviour, toward God and man in this world: so that they who have done good shall go into life eternal, and they that have done evil, into eternal fire: and consequently, if they did not know the certain time of their death, they would live and die as bad as they do now in the state of uncertainty: for, if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one arose from the dead. Wherefore although it cannot be denied, but that the heat and extravagancies of *youth* might be sooner corrected, and heaven and hell more exactly represented by this means; yet God does not think fit to do either; because it offers too much force and violence to the freedom of man's will. It should be considered, that our abode upon earth is a state of probation: we are created to live virtuous lives; to reverence our God; and to conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the power of faith: and therefore as God hath set before us both good and evil, and will enable us to choose the good, he will not force any

man: he has given the gospel for our trial and discipline: and if the certain hopes and fears of another world, and the uncertainty of our living here, revealed by his word, will not conquer these flattering temptations, and make men seriously religious, as those who must certainly die, and go into another world, and they know not how soon, God will not, and is not in justice bound to try whether the certain knowledge of their death will make them wise unto salvation. It is sufficient reason for young men to expect death, and to prepare for it in the days of their youth, when they are convinced by thousands of examples that they may die young: therefore if they will venture, and eternally miscarry by their wilful delays, they must take their chance, and not say, they had no warning of dying young. The merciful God will accept of repenting prodigals; he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live; yet he cannot in justice encourage us in sin, by giving us notice of the hour of our death, which would only serve to put off our repentance, till death stares us in the face, which is the worst time for so weighty and important a work. And,

As there is found no reason in favour of youth, neither can there be any assigned, why this knowledge should be granted to *old age:* on the contrary, we may now observe, while life and death is in this state of uncertainty, that the very flattering ourselves with the hopes of a long life is apt to make us too desirous of a continuance thereof: this is often found to weaken the hopes and fears of the next world, by removing it at too great a distance from us; and to encourage men to live in sin, while they imagine that they have time enough before them to indulge their appetites, to repent of their offences, and to make their peace with God before they die: and if the uncertain hopes of this undo so many, what can be expected from the certain knowledge thereof? It may be feared, that even they, who are too wise to be imposed upon by such uncertain hopes, might be conquered by the certain knowledge of the distant time of their death. For such a fore-knowledge would take off all restraints from men; who, how wicked soever they might be,

knowing that they could never be surprised by death, would naturally give a free scope to their vicious inclinations; and, besides, it would destroy one great motive to obedience, as it is written, The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened; or, the wicked shall not live out half their days. Which, and the like promises and threatenings, must be struck out of the Bible, should it be revealed to every man how long he has to live. And whereas now public calamities, plague and famine and the sword, alarm a wicked world, summon men to repentance, and reclaim sinners; and sometimes a dangerous or painful fit of illness awakens men to an abhorrence of their former wickednesses, and settles in their hearts a true, sincere, and continuing repentance; those means, by which the goodness of God exhorts us to turn unto him, would all prove insufficient, did men know the certain end of their life, and that they should not die under any of those public judgments, or be bowed down to the grave by their present distempers. Therefore,

Let us thank the Almighty, that he has hidden the hour of our death from our mortal eyes, and so improve the uncertainty of our lives, as God did intend we should, in a constant watchfulness against sin, and in an early and persevering course of virtue; that when we shall depart out of this world, we may be judged worthy of life everlasting. And let us confess without wavering, that to know when we shall die would serve no good end, but would only tend to increase the too luxuriant wickedness of mankind; which is a sufficient vindication of the wisdom of God, who has reserved to himself the knowledge of that particular time, when man shall be called from time to eternity.

Seeing then, we are certain, that we cannot live above threescore or fourscore years, or some few years over or under, we should not extend our hopes, expectations, and designs beyond this time, which God has fixed for the conclusion of our abode upon earth. And, as we ought not to live as if we were immortal creatures who never die: so it is unreasonable for us to trouble ourselves about this world, longer than we are like to continue

therein. Did men only consider how long they may or can live, and set bounds to their necessary provisions here upon earth, they might see some end of their labour, cares, and riches, and of adding house to house, and field to field: whereas in the present practice of covetous nature, mankind drudge on to the last moment they have to live, heaping up riches, without knowing who shall gather them; or as if their lives, and their enjoyments of them, were also never to have an end. I allow that a competent provision for children is a just reason to continue our industry, though we have enough for the natural course of our own lives; but to labour to leave them rich is rather an excuse than a reason; because great riches are often the child's misfortune, who, not being trained up in the paths of righteousness, has been too much pampered in the ways of the world; whereas it is the piety of parents, which entails a blessing on their posterity; and an industrious and virtuous education is a better inheritance for children than a great fortune. Nay, it is observed, that men, who are so intent, to the very last stage of their life, to increase their estates, seldom do it for any other reason, but to gratify their own insatiable thirst, which is to hoard up riches for a time when they cannot enjoy them, and to provide for their own living in this world a much longer time than they know they can possibly live therein. But

II. *How to number our days.*

As God has vouchsafed to reveal to us the common end of human life, we should so *number our days*, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom; to observe the continual waste of our lives, and how they daily draw to an end. Before we can attain that happiness which Christ has purchased for us, we must prepare ourselves for a holy and happy death; in which we ought to use the greatest care and caution; because a mistake in this matter is never to be recalled. Men can die but once; and death will certainly translate us to endless joys, or consign us to everlasting torments; so

that nothing can be wiser than to take such measures as may prevent the one, and secure the other.

Consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you: consider it before all opportunities of reconciling yourselves to an offended God shall be taken away, and the door of hope shall be for ever shut against you. Listen to the threatenings of God's holy word, the admonitions of his blessed spirit, and the checks of your own consciences. Set about the great work of your salvation to-day, while it is called to-day, before the night cometh, when no man can work. For though you may now be in health, in the prime and vigour of your years, enjoying the pleasures of a great and splendid fortune; yet the time is coming and (whether you think of it or no) will hasten on a pace, when you must take your leave of all that is desirable on earth; and nothing will then stand you in any stead but a good conscience; neither honours, nor riches, nor any thing else that men are now so fond of, will then be able to give you one moment's ease, or afford you one comfortable thought. The best preparation for death is the constant exercising of piety and virtue in the whole course of our lives; this is the only armour that is proof against the attacks of that dreadful enemy to nature. So that men strangely delude themselves, who depend upon any other method than that of keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. The sinner, however he may now trust in the multitude of his riches, and strengthen himself in his wickedness, must then let go all his dependencies, and descend into the regions of darkness without hope (and what is yet more terrible) with dreadful expectations. Of what infinite moment is it then to us all so to live, that, when the time appointed for our great change shall come, we may meet death without fear and astonishment, and, with a humble confidence, may look up to God in assured hope of his mercy in Christ Jesus! Therefore whosoever would make death safe and happy must reconcile himself to God by a sincere and hearty repentance, and a true faith in Jesus Christ;

which we should immediately apply ourselves unto, lest sickness and death should overtake us, before we have accomplished so necessary a work.

Though a *deathbed* may be a proper season to renew our repentance, and to trim our lamp; yet it is the most unfit time to begin it; and it then very rarely, if ever, takes effect: for we can never have any security that a *late repentance* is *hearty* and *sincere*. A man may very well, at the amazing approach of death and judgment, be extremely sorry that he has lived wickedly; he may strongly wish that he had lived the life of the righteous; and resolve, if he were to live over again, that he would do so; and yet all this may be merely the passion, and not all the duty of repentance; which is an entire change of mind, and an effectual reformation of life: but the passion of sorrow and remorse is such as accursed spirits shall be for ever tormented with in vain; and such as a dying penitent can never be secure that his late repentance will exceed. It is true, indeed, this is all that man who has led a wicked life can do, when he comes to die; and it would be well for his own sake, and for the sake of his sorrowful friends and relations, that he would do thus much, and not go out of the world hardened and unrepenting; for who knows how far infinite mercy may be extended! But surely, it must be allowed to be the greatest instance of folly to venture a matter of such infinite moment upon so uncertain an issue, upon a few broken, confused, and almost despairing sighs and groans; for, if the dying agonies and horrors, the solemn vows and resolutions of such men should not prove a true godly sorrow, and repentance to salvation not to be repented of (as no man living can say they certainly will) they are lost and undone to all eternity. But

Supposing a late repentance to be hearty and sincere; yet we have no absolute promise, that it shall be accepted of. The plain and express condition of the covenant established by Christ is a holy life: that is, a constant and persevering obedience to all the commands of God, from the time of our baptism, or of our

coming to the knowledge of the truth until the end of our lives. And the least that can possibly lay claim to the reward promised upon this condition is such a repentance as produces the actual obedience of at least some proportionable part of a man's life. Therefore to say that the original condition of the christian covenant is such, that a man may safely live wickedly all his life, and satisfy all his lusts and appetites to the utmost, provided he does but leave off and forsake his sins at the last, is really to take away the necessity of a holy life and to undermine the very foundation of all virtues. Consequently, though God may possibly have reserves of mercy, which in event he may exercise toward men in their last extremity; yet originally, it is certain, the gospel covenant gives no assurance of comfort, but either to a persevering holiness, or to a repentance evidenced by actually renewed obedience.

Let those men consider these things, who resolve now to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and hope hereafter by a late repentance to get also a share in the eternal rewards of virtue: let them consider that they may be cut off in the midst of their hopes; or that they may be as unwilling to repent hereafter, as they are at present. A man, by a long course of wickedness, may arrive at such a hardened state, as to be incapable of any sensible impressions; his soul may be seared, as it were, with a hot iron, and be fallen into such a deep and fatal lethargy, as that nothing shall be able to awaken it, till it comes to feel the very torments of the damned. But, above all, let them consider, that though they should live to that time, when they shall be willing to leave their sins, because the strength of their temptations will cease; yet they cannot be sure that God will then accept them. Suppose this to be possible, which is often not the case; yet what is this, but to deal with God, as you would with an enemy, to whom, when you have held out as long as possible, you then surrender yourself, and make the best terms you can? And can you think that your Maker will be tamely put off after such a manner? If you would save your soul alive, it is not enough that you do not labour

under a complication of vices; one habitual vice, one inveterate distemper of mind, will prove a sickness unto death, if you do not make it your endeavour to be cured of it. The express condition of the gospel is, that we seek first the kingdom of God, that we deny ourselves, and that we overcome the world; and the threatenings which the scripture denounces against those who refuse to hear the voice of God when he calls, and to seek him while he may be found, are terrible to impenitent sinners: for he will by no means clear the guilty; nor can by any application be reconciled to sin. No bribe, no artifice, no intercession, no length of time, can change his hatred to unrighteous actions, or hinder him, without true repentance and effectual amendment, from punishing unrighteous men. His wisdom, his honour, his goodness, obliges him to preserve the dignity of his laws and government; and it is therefore a dreadful thing for wilful sinners to fall into the hands of the ever-living and ever-unchangeable God Let those therefore, who have yet the time before them, consider what they have to do; let them be careful to hearken unto the voice of God to-day, while it is called to-day; let them be zealous to improve that time and those talents wherewith God has blessed them, that when their Master cometh, he may find them so doing, and bid them, as having been good and faithful servants, to enter into the joy of their Lord: I say, let us consider these things; and, while we rightly maintain, that true repentance cannot at any time be in vain, or ineffectual to procure pardon, let us be careful not to entertain any such notions of repentance as will take away the necessity of a holy life, and of that persevering obedience, which is the express and indispensable condition of the gospel-covenant. And

Even they who are ready to welcome death by an *habitual preparation*, and have governed their lives under the conduct and influence of the thoughts of dying long before, must not rest in the decline of their days, in too great a security; they have not yet perfected the great work of salvation, which we are all

sent into the world to finish under Jesus Christ, the great author thereof. They must therefore remember that there must be a *solemn preparation* for it, or a thorough review of their lives and actions: they must make their peace with God and their own consciences, by examining whether there be any sin, which they have not sincerely repented of, and heartily begged God's pardon for; whether they have made restitution and reparation, as far as in their power for injuries done to their neighbour; whether they are in love and christian charity with all men: whether they have formerly been too negligent of their duty of charity to the poor, education of their own children, support of their families, and such like duties required in their proper station of life; and henceforth they must apply themselves to a more diligent discharge thereof, by rectifying the distempers of their minds, mortifying disorderly passions, and improving that grace which God giveth bountifully to all men. And they who thus prepare themselves for death will have great hope and assurance in their latter end. Therefore

Let us not reckon upon living threescore years and ten, or fourscore years, when very likely thirty or forty, the best half of our lives, are already past away. Would men but seriously think upon this, they would not be so apt to flatter themselves with a long life; for no man accounts twenty or thirty years a long life; yet that is the most they, who are come to the decline of age, have to live, though they should be prolonged to the longest term of a common duration: much less should they flatter themselves with a long life, when probably ten or fifteen years must balance the account with nature. What shall we say then of those men, who draw near the end of their reckoning, or, perchance, who have already spun out the common thread of human life? These should, as the world expresses it, be doubly diligent in their preparation for the approaching dissolution of their body and soul: which, how vigorous soever their constitution may appear, cannot be at a great distance. These, who have already attained to the common measure of human life

are already in the borders, or rather the very quarters of death, are unpardonable, if they are deceived with the hopes of living much longer.

By a thorough knowledge of the state of our own souls, we should enjoy peace and satisfaction of mind; and not only deliver our consciences from guilty fears, but even disarm death of its stings and terrors, by reforming whatever was amiss: for the sting of death is sin, and, when this sting is pulled out, we have nothing else to contend with, but some little aversions to dying, which are more easily overcome by the joyful prospect of eternal glory, which waits on the brink of eternity to receive those that die in the Lord; especially if we consider, what a blessed place it is: where we shall be delivered from all the fears, and sorrows, and temptations of this world: where we shall see God and the blessed Jesus face to face, and converse with angels and glorified spirits, without fear of dying any more: where there is nothing but perfect love and peace; no cross interests and factions to contend with; no storms to ruffle and disturb our joy and rest for ever: where there is no pain, no sickness, or labour, no care to refresh the weariness, or to repair the decays of a mortal body, nor so much as the image of death, to interrupt our pleasures for evermore. Then we shall serve God, not after the manner of men, with dull and unaffecting devotions, but with piercing thoughts, transport, life and vigour.—Whereas,

III. *Of Preparation for Death.*

Such men as converse much in this world, and are distracted with the cares and business of it; if they live in a hurry, so as when they have discharged one obligation, they are pressed hard with another; that in the morning they have no time to beg God's blessing, nor hardly spirits left to say their prayers at night; and the Lord's day itself is thought more proper for rest and refreshment for their bodies, than, as it ought to be, for devotion towards God, who has sanctified it to his own name, and for his peculiar service: such

men, I say, can have but very dull apprehensions of another life; because it is well known that, after all the care we can take, this word will insinuate itself into our affections, when our whole business is buying and selling, and driving good bargains: for such a hurry as this disorders our passions, occasions feuds and quarrels, and gives us such a tincture of covetousness, ambition and pride, that there is work enough after a busy life to root out the love of this world, and to settle our whole desire on a future happy state.

We must also set our house in order, by a prudent and pious disposition of our worldly affairs, which requires time and consideration to do it well; and therefore cannot so well be dispatched in our last moments, when our minds are disordered, our bodies oppressed with pain and sickness, and when we run the hazard of being imposed upon by those who out of interest diligently attend us on these occasions. Perhaps we may in some measure be free from those inconveniencies; yet the little time we shall then have to live is too precious to be consumed about the vanities we are going to leave. Wherefore, except we make our wills in the days of our health, that matter possibly may never be performed, or after such an imperfect manner, as to convey strife and contention to our posterity: and at best, when we are least able to bear it, to give great trouble and disorder to ourselves: so that such a will is often rather the will of those about us than our own intentions. We ought to have both thought and consideration to dispose of our estates in a christian manner; to give children their fitting portions; to acknowledge the kindness of our friends; to reward the services of our dependants, and make distributions for the poor and needy: and all this in so clear a manner, that no differences or lawsuits may thence arise among those we leave in the world. For which purpose the church hath directed the minister, when he attends the sick person, if he 'hath not disposed of his goods, to admonish him to make his will, and to declare his debts, what he owes, and what is owing to him, for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his executors: withal acknowledging

that men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling their temporal estates while they are in health.'

It is further necessary to make us die with comfort and satisfaction, that we wean our affections from the things of this world; for our concern to part with them will always bear a proportion to the love and esteem wherewith we have enjoyed them; and to be separated from objects upon which we have fixed our hearts, must be attended with great uneasiness and regret. Therefore we should accustom ourselves to resign freely to God what death will snatch from us by force; and gently to untie those knots, which fasten us to the world, that we may have less pain when they are to be entirely dissolved. Which practice consists in being less concerned for the things of the body, and all bodily pleasures; to expect, with submission to the will of God, the success of our temporal affairs; to suppress all ambitious and covetous desires; to retrench sometimes the use of lawful pleasures; to abound in works of charity; to be most ready to part with what we love most, when God thinks fit; and to bear all losses and afflictions without murmuring and repining: so that we may be able to say, we die daily: not only because the time of our death is every moment approaching, but also because we find daily less fondness for life, less earnestness for trifles, less desire of applause, less eagerness for profit, and less concern for whatever is most esteemed by the world. And as the days of our pilgrimage here upon earth must draw to an end, which were given us to glorify God both in our souls and bodies, to do good unto all men, and to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; we should use great care about the spending our short time in improper visits, or in vain diversions, or in sloth, as if mirth and doing nothing were the business of our mortal state. Let us now therefore, if we are settled in a calling, manage it with justice and diligence, always remembering we have a christian calling, of greater importance: if we are not engaged in the world, let us choose such circumstances as we shall most approve of in a dying hour: if we

have great estates, and the advantages of power and understanding, let us look upon ourselves as under the greater obligations to spend our time well; because in such circumstances there is greater capacity and leisure to attend the good of others, as well as our own salvation. But,

Our immediate preparation for death consists in bearing our sickness, that precedes it, with a true *christian frame and temper of mind;* with great patience under our sufferings, and resignation of mind to the will of God; with a firm trust and dependance upon his infinite wisdom and goodness, and with thankful acknowledgements of those mercies with which he allays the sorrows of our distemper, and lightens the burden under which we labour; carefully restraining all murmuring against God, or any discontent, by reason thereof; watching against all the temptations to anger, such as the mistakes and inadvertencies of those about us, the unseasonable kindness of our friends, the disagreeableness of our medicines, and such-like: curbing anxious fears of worse than may come to pass. And being content to *wait God's time* for our deliverance, we must quiet our minds under the apprehensions of future evils, by considering that we are in the hands of a good God, who will lay no more upon us than we are able to bear; and who will in his due time either remove what afflicts us, or give us strength to endure it in such a manner, that it may contribute to the improvement of our virtue here, and the increase of our happiness hereafter. So that however destitute we leave our nearest relations, as wife and children; yet we must consider, that they are under the protection of Providence, whose blessing is the richest portion, and without which the best human prudence is no safeguard. We must rest fully assured, that what God chooses for us is much better than what we could wish for ourselves, were we left to our own choice: we must embrace our sickness and our pains, as the chastisement of our past follies, and as proper methods for our growth in grace, and the love of God, and be contented to refer the continuance and event of our sickness to God's good pleasure; because his infinite wisdom knows the best sea-

son for our deliverance; and as he first put us into the world, so he is fittest to judge when we should go out thereof.

Neither must we forget to desire the *assistance of a spiritual guide*, to offer up our prayers, and to support our weakness with the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper; spiritualizing all the accidents of our sickness, making them a ground of pious and devout thoughts, which may be sent up in frequent ejaculations to God, who alone can be our comfort under all our distress; imploring his blessing upon all the means we use for our recovery; and offering to him all the pains we endure, as what we are more willing to suffer than to offend him by.

SUNDAY XVII. Part II.

IV. *Of the Death of the Righteous.*

It must indeed be owned, that death is the great king of terrors, that the dissolution of soul and body, and the thoughts of becoming a prey to the devouring worms, carries in it something very shocking to human nature: yet, to a good man, death appears in a quite different view. He considers that to leave this world is only to quit a place of trouble and vexation, of vanity and emptiness; it is to leave a barren and dry wilderness, where no water is, for the delightful regions of bliss and happiness, where there are rivers of pleasure, and a never-ceasing spring of endless comfort, which will satisfy the most longing desires of the soul. Thus the happiness of the *death of the righteous* doth not consist in any freedom from painful and noisome diseases; nor in any exemption from sudden and unseen accidents and dangers, which often bring the righteous as well as the wicked to their graves: as we learn, not only by experience, but in the case of Lazarus, for whom was prepared a retreat in Abraham's bosom, yet had his body full of sores, and ended his life in a miserable and forlorn condition; while the rich man, whose luxury had kindled for him inextinguishable flames, only grew sick and died. I say then, this happiness of the good man's death doth not

consist in freedom from pain and noisome diseases, but it is distinguished by the temper and disposition of his mind, and is founded on a well-grounded hope and comfortable expectation of a blessed immortality, through the merits of Christ's death, promised to a sincere, though imperfect obedience to his law. Such a temper makes him contented to quit that body, which he hath always mortified, and to leave this world as a strange land, where he hath been detained a prisoner. And such as desire to be expert in all the devout acts of a pious soul, upon the approach of death, will set apart some time in their retirements to fit and prepare themselves for death, by a solemn exercise of all such virtues, as christians shall then stand most in need of; that they may not be at a loss to perform them, when they become weak and languishing. And, if I may be allowed to hint at such a time, I think the evenings of those days whereon we received the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper, may properly be dedicated to so good and necessary a work: by which, when we really come into the confines of death, our minds may be stored with devout thoughts, and may readily express themselves in those pious acts, which we frequently exercised upon such a prospect of our certain dissolution, or departure from this world,

Thus having seen that the life of man is fixed and determined by God, and that this term of life is but very *short* of the utmost extent thereof; threescore and ten or fourscore years soon pass away, and, when they are gone, they are like a dream or a tale that is told, few and empty; let them, who have lived thirty or forty years, confess how little they remember in what manner they are past, and that the remainder of their life is drawing to an end, while they eat, drink, and sleep. As therefore our life is so very short, we ought to live as much as we can in so short a space, not measuring the length or shortness of our lives by days, months, or years, or by the whole time of our continuance in the body; but by such actions as distinguish a man from all other things which God created; and by exercising the understanding and will upon such objects as answer the dignity and perfection of a reasonable creature; consequently, he that eats

and drinks, and performs the other offices of a natural life, which are common to him with beasts, lives only like a beast: because a man's actions are to be governed by reason, religion, and virtue. Therefore he who improves his knowledge and understanding most; who subdues his appetites and passions best; who does most good, and makes himself most useful to the world; though he does not continue longer, yet he lives more and longer than other men; forasmuch as he is instructed and fully persuaded, that the life which he enjoys here is only in order to a better, and exerts more frequent and more perfect acts of a rational and christian life. Wherefore St. James declares, Ye know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. Consequently,

Such a one has lived a great while, how short soever the time be, who is old in virtue, and ripe for heaven and eternal bliss? who has laid up riches and glorious treasures for himself in a future state; who has answered the ends of his life by acts of piety and virtue, by improvements in knowledge and grace, and the love of God and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord. Hence

Let us observe, that the shortness of our lives is a sufficient answer to all those objections against Providence, taken from the prosperity of good men, and the miseries and afflictions of the good; for both of them are so short, that they are nothing compared to eternal pains and glory. As for the prosperity of wicked men, it can last but a little while: therefore says the inspired Psalmist, I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. And, as for the afflictions of the godly, the apostle declares that his light affliction, which endureth but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

Besides, a long life is not reconcileable with the present state of the universe; because the world is now very unequally divided: some have nothing but what they can earn by hard labour, or extort from other men's charity

by continual importunity, or more ungodly means: wherefore, notwithstanding the rich and prosperous, who have this world's goods, and live in ease and pleasure, would be well contented to continue some hundreds of years in this life; yet I cannot think, that any body would desire to suffer threescore years more or less, in slavery, beggary, hunger, imprisonment, or such like distresses. Consequently, a great part of mankind ought to be very thankful to God for the shortness of life, which delivers them out of so much evil. Again, our lives are long enough for all the wise purposes of living: we come into this world not barely to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the delights of flesh and sense, which are only means to preserve life, and which God has sweetened with such proper satisfactions, or made the neglect of them so uneasy and painful that no man might forget to take care to preserve himself; but we are born to conquer the wicked world, to triumph over it, to baffle its temptations, to despise its flatteries, and to endure its terrors and vexations; and if we live long enough to perform this work, we ought to resign our breath with content, and thank God that he does so soon put an end to our labour, sorrow, and temptations.

V. *Of a Middle State.*

By this it is plain, that we cannnot live as we ought to do without *knowledge* and *virtue:* which, some may presume to say, are not to be so well attained in a short time, as in a long course of years. It is true, were the knowledge, which is necessary to improve a christian mind, the dark and intricate study of human learning, the age of Methuselah could not attain to all its parts and deep recesses: but the knowledge necessary for a christian, or to carry men to heaven, is imbibed with our first instructions in the christian faith; for, as we read in the holy gospel, This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. So that our necessary knowledge, in order to save our souls, is not a solution of the difficulties of nature, or concerning the secret things of God; but it is confined

within the narrow bounds of divine revelation, or faith in God through his son Jesus Christ. But, in regard to virtue, it may be urged, that the longer a man lives, the more good he will do, and make himself more useful to his fellow-creatures. This may be granted: yet it does not follow, that such a virtuous man ought to live longer upon earth than the common age of human kind; because though he was born for this end, to do good unto all men; yet it was in order to his own eternal welfare; and consequently, when by virtue he is fully prepared for heaven, it would be unjust to deprive him of the happy prize, after having run his race and conquered: besides, this is God's care, who discharges him from doing any more good in this world, whenever he calls him to eternal rest. And as for the attainment of virtue, there is no need of long time, for it is proposed to us in the most plain and easy precepts, the most admirable examples, the most encouraging and inviting promises, and with the most powerful assurances of the holy spirit, to aid, renew, and sanctify us: so that whosoever is not reformed by these divine methods of grace in the compass of forty or fifty years, is not likely to be the better for them at the end of so many generations.

Therefore, a divine soul, which aspires after immortality, should lose no time to raise itself above the body, to conquer this present world by the belief and hope of things unseen, to exercise its spiritual powers and faculties, and to adorn itself with those graces and virtues which come down from the Father of lights, and which by the mercies of God, and the merits of our Saviour, will carry us to heaven; especially when he is threatened with endless misery for the neglect of his salvation. So, how hard soever the libertine may think it to be eternally damned for the short pleasures of sin, no man can reasonably think it a hard condition of eternal salvation to spend a short life in the service of his Maker: which service can no where be performed but upon earth. For, if God may justly require our services and obedience for so great a reward as a crown of eternal glory; if nature, in its corrupt state, must be born again, and cleansed from all filth of sin: if this body must be refined and

spiritualized, before it can be glorified; where must this work be perfected, if not upon earth? For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

We have no information by holy writ of any *middle state* between living in this body and out of it; and therefore whatever dispositions and habits of the mind are necessary to make us happy, when the soul departs from the body, must be formed while we live in these bodies of flesh. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body: yet that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. Therefore as it is impossible to pass immediately from the opposite natural state of the earth to the spiritual state of heaven; we must be convinced, that the middle state in which we are spiritualized, between heaven and earth, is a life of holiness during the time we inhabit these earthly tabernacles: because such a man, living in the world, and having put off its lusts, and fixed his mind on things above, belongs to both worlds: his heart and affections are in heaven; he by faith meditates upon those invisible glories, and feels and relishes the pleasures of a heavenly state, while he is yet united to this world by his body, which is made of earth, and feels the natural impression of sensible objects. So, whoever has his conversation in heaven, while he lives upon earth, is ready prepared and fitted to ascend with the Bridegroom, when death shall knock at the door: passing thence, as it were, through a middle region, or a state of a holy and divine life, into a perfect state of eternal happiness.

Since then death puts an end to our days, in which we are to serve God, and prepare for eternity, and determines our future state for ever; and knowing that this death comes but once, it is of infinite consequence, that when death comes, we may be well prepared for his summons into eternity. And who would not take the utmost caution in doing that, which can be done only once in his life, especially if the whole happiness of his life depends thereon? No error can be corrected in what is to be done but once: and shall that person hope for pardon, who permits death to surprise him: who falls into the

grave without thought of futurity, or, what is worse, not only makes a jest of sin, but defies God and his judgments? A wise man will use great caution in making an experiment, that can never be tried a second time, and which, if it fail, must absolutely cost him his life: which is the very case of all men, in regard of death: we can die but once, and, if we miscarry that once, we are undone for ever: yet this is the dangerous experiment made every day by sinners, who stake their souls at random, endeavour to stifle the checks of conscience, put off their repentance, in hopes that death is still far off, that sickness and God's holy spirit will call them in time to repent; and, at the best, venture the hazard of a death-bed repentance. Let no one be deceived! that man will be miserable, who is so weak to think that a few confused, and almost despairing sighs and groans can obtain pardon and forgiveness for a mis-spent life. If such bold adventurers could return back into the world, and live their lives over again, after they have discovered their mistake and folly, the hazard would not be so great; but this is impossible. Whoever walks in the paths of unrighteousness till he is hardened in sin, and, having grieved the spirit, is forsaken of the grace of God: whoever is cut off by death, by surprise or without warning, while he continues in sin, must be lost for ever; because he dies without that repentance to salvation, never to be repented of. Is not then that man most foolish, who takes no care, before death comes, to make his calling and election sure?

Remember then that you must die! and that will furnish you with a perpetual remedy against the vanities of this wicked world, and promote the growth of christian piety. Whenever a man finds that his desires after this world exceed their limitations in the gospel, let him remember the fool in the gospel, whose soul was required of him the same night that he enlarged his desires beyond the necessaries of life: let him remember, that he can have no continuing abode here; that death will shortly close his eyes, and the grave swallow him up, and then all his thoughts perish, and his riches cannot follow him. In this decay of nature, neither fortune nor honours will

avail us in the day of the Lord, any further than the good use we have made of them in this world; and, unless the rich and honorable are more virtuous than he, they are not better than the poorest man, who begs an alms in the name of the Lord: for with God there is no respect of persons; because they are not the riches of the body, but the beauties of the spirit, which are pleasing in the sight of God; for it is godliness that is great gain. And if there can be no trust in riches nor honors, it is folly for a man to be intoxicated with the love of sensual pleasures, which must all perish with the body. The soul, which desires to live for ever, must not be weakened with ease and luxury, which are the plain paths to hell; but must be accustomed to seek after eternal pleasures, which accompany it beyond the grave, and being stript of flesh and blood, enable it to live for ever. Not that I say, or suppose, that men, who must make a necessary provision for the body in this life, can so live always here, as if the next moment were to end their lives; but only that our lives should always be as innocent, free from malice, injustice, and oppression, as if we were immediately to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that is, we must always live as those who must certainly die, and guard all our actions with the thoughts that *they* must *all* one day be accounted for.

VI. *The Fear of Death, how overcome.*

The common and very proper name of death is the *king of terrors;* because it is the most terrible thing to mankind. The natural principle of self-preservation, and the love of life, create in all men a natural aversion to death: for, as the Preacher observes, As light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun; so, as all men love life, its necessary consequence is to fear death: which aversion to death God has imprinted in man, to oblige us to take care of ourselves, and to avoid whatever will destroy or shorten

our lives; and this in many particulars is a great principle of virtue, so far as it preserves us from all fatal and destructive vices. Yet when this natural fear of death is not increased by extraordinary causes, it may be conquered by the force of sound reason. Thus many examples teach, that the miseries and calamities of this life very often reconcile men to death, and make them earnestly desire it; as in the case of Job, who in the midst of his afflictions said, My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life; I loathe it, I would not live alway. Whence observe, that, if the sense of present suffering can conquer the fears of death, there is no doubt but the hope of immortal life may do the same in a more eminent degree; for, were men are thoroughly convinced, that by death they are to be translated to a more happy state, it would be as easy a thing to put off these bodies, as to change their clothes, or to remove from a ruinous house to a more convenient dwelling-place. This is the very case of a dying christian, whose fear of death arising naturally either from the thoughts of ceasing to be, or an unwillingness to change this life for one he knows nothing of, is taken away by the gospel revelation, which discovers to us a new and glorious world, where we, if we now improve our time, may live for ever. Thus a christian, whose life is conformable to the doctrine and example of his Saviour, sees nothing frightful or terrible in death, which, through the infirmity of the flesh, his body naturally startles at, and draws back from, as he meets with it in the way to immortal life: therefore, though we cannot expect wholly to conquer our natural aversion to death, we can always have a hope of a blessed immortality, and, with St. Paul, desire, if not to be unclothed, to be clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up in life. Consequently the only way to arm ourselves against these natural fears of dying, is to comfirm ourselves in this belief, that death does not put an end to us, that our souls shall survive in a state of bliss and happiness, though our bodies shall turn to dust, and that these mortal bodies shall themselves rise

again immortal and glorious at the sound of the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.—So the man, who believes and expects this, can have no reason to be afraid of death; on the contrary, he has great reason not to fear death, though he tremble a little under the weakness and aversions of nature in its degenerate state. But,

As sin is the cause of death, so also is it that only which makes death itself most terrible. It is not barely the separation of soul and body, which is the terror of death to a christian; but that separation, as inflicted by, and accompanied with, the wrath of God, It is sin only, which is the horror of death, and which gives it that sting, which makes it really insupportable even to the most distant thought. When the death of the body is the forerunner of that death of the soul, from which there is no hope of release, but the wrath of God must abide on it for ever; then it is that death appears truly dreadful and terrible. This is that which makes wicked men conscious of their own guilt and sensible of the wrath of God hanging over their heads, so amazed at the approach, and even at the thoughts of death: they cannot bear to think on so affrighting a prospect, but are even overwhelmed with astonishment and despair. For a wicked man to consider, that the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, and consequently that he is of the number of those, whom God hates and despises, must strike the sinner with horror and amazement, and make him tremble even in the midst of his greatest mirth. The libertine may flatter himself as he pleases; and think to deceive others, by putting on an air of gaiety and pleasantness; but, it is certain, his mind can never be long at rest, while he carries about him a faithful monitor, that will be continually upbraiding him for his folly and madness; representing before his eyes the danger he is exposed to, and crossing him, as it were, in his way, while in full pursuit of his unlawful pleasures. It is true indeed, vice has its present pleasures as well as virtue: but then there is this difference between them;

the pleasures of sin are weak, short-lived, and only varnished over; they begin and end almost in the same moment, and can never be purchased but at the expence of a deal of succeeding trouble, shame, and self-condemnation. Yet,

If we consider the reason why death is so terrible to most men, we shall find their unwillingness to leave this world occasioned by that great fondness and passion, which the generality of mankind retain for this present life; insomuch that, whatever glorious things they hear of a future state, they being of the earth, earthly, only like what they see; and not expecting to better their condition, choose to stay in this life; so that it is a double death to these, when snatched away from their darling pleasures. In such a case, nothing would be more effectual to moderate our desires for things of this nature, now we are alive and well, than seriously to reflect, in what light they will appear to us, just at the point of death. No one can be more miserable than the men of the world, who seldom think of any thing beyond it, when they are not to continue longer in it. And, as it will be in vain to set about to persuade them, that the next world is a happier place than this, the best way will be to endeavour their conversion, by setting before them the terrors of a future state, where the devil, his angels, and the unhappy souls of unrepenting sinners, departed this life, are confined to all eternity in lakes of fire and brimstone. Ask that mere worldling, what shall it profit him to gain the whole world, and to loose his own soul; or what can he give in exchange for his soul? In a word, drive such men on to dread and fear the consequences of a mis-spent life, till the fear of death cures their vicious passions and thirst after this world; and then the fear of death will by degrees cure itself of that irksomeness so common in human nature. And consequently they, who intend in good earnest to set about the cure of this fear of death, should mortify all remains of love and affection for this world, and withdraw themselves as much as possible from the conversation thereof, using it spar-

ingly and with indifference, rather to supply the wants, than to enjoy the pleasures of nature: and then they will find no more difficulty to leave this world for heaven, than a traveller does, when he leaves a foreign country, to return to his native land. Now,

VII. *Height of Christian Perfection.*

Whoever can thus meet death is arrived to the *height and perfection of christian virtue*; for this is the true mortification of the flesh, with its affections and lusts. This is the way to die to this world, and to live unto God; and when we are dead to this world, the fear of dying and leaving it will cease: for what should a man do in this world, who is dead to it and all things therein? So, when we are alive to God, nothing can be so desirable as to go to him: for here we live only to God by faith and hope; whereas the place, where God dwells, is the proper place for this divine life. Behold then! I have laid before you the happy state of good men at the hour of death. The consciousness of having in some measure lived holily and unblamably will make a man look up with a cheerful assurance to the great supporter of his being, and enable him to see through the darkest clouds of sorrow and affliction, and to behold with an eye of faith that heavenly country, whither he is travelling, and where he hopes shortly to arrive. In the hour of death he considers the pains of his dissolution to be nothing else but the breaking down of that partition, which stands between his soul and the sight of that Being who is always present with him, and is about to manifest itself to him in fulness of joy: and he will look into eternity without terror; where instead of a court of justice, he is to approach a throne of grace; instead of a judge, rigorous to mark what is done amiss, he will meet with an Advocate and a Saviour, who died for us, and has redeemed us at the price of his own blood. Such a soul as this casts away fear, possesses a perfect calm

and serenity, and transported with joy and triumph, magnifies the Lord, and rejoices in God its Saviour, who is ready to pronounce it blessed, and to crown it with glory. This is the death of the righteous; and God grant that our latter end may be like his: that in the agonies of death, and in the very jaws of the grave we may not be discomposed with disturbing thoughts, nor distracted with guilty fears; but that we may depart this life with all the joyful tokens of eternal rest. Therefore, says the apostle to the Corinthians, My beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.—And what a glorious testament now is this to all men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world! that no good action, that we do, shall be lost and fall to the ground; but that in a little time all our services will be infinitely rewarded: that every grace and virtue, which we exercised in this life, and every degree of them, shall receive their just recompence at the resurrection of the just; and that if we believe in God, and serve him faithfully and sincerely in this life, we may be assured, that through the tender mercies of our heavenly Father, and the merits of our Redeemer, we shall be received into a place of everlasting rest and peace, where we shall adore and praise the author of our salvation, and contemplate the glorious perfections of his majesty, with a joy and satisfaction infinitely exceeding all that we can now possibly conceive! when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and death and sorrow shall be no more! when we shall be eased of all our pains, and resolved of all our doubts, and be purged from all our sins, and be freed from all our fears, and be happy beyond our hopes, and have all this happiness secured to us beyond the power of time and change! I shall therefore conclude with my earnest request for the good of your soul, that you immediately enter upon the practice of what you have read in this book, and are taught to be your duty, and the duty of every Christian.—Delays are dangerous, and especially in a matter of

so great importance as the care of our souls: and one moment of time may deprive us by unforeseen accidents of those means of grace, which now God has put into our hands: *Make* therefore *no long tarrying to turn to the Lord, and not put off from day to day.*

THE END OF THE THIRD PART.

Francis Setts
was born febery
Seven hundred and
fifty nin 1:7:39
Mary Setts was
born won thousan
seven hundred and
fifty eigh 17:38
yenery

Uncle Price's Mother's Name

DEVOTIONS

FOR THE USE OF

FAMILIES AND PARTICULAR PERSONS.

Note, When the Prayers for *Morning* or *Evening* are to be used with a *Family*, instead of *I*, say *we*; for *me*, say *us*; &c.

☞ *For the* necessity *and* advantages *of* Prayer, *see Sunday* 7.

DIRECITONS AND PRAYERS FOR MORNING.

DIRECTIONS.

The best preparation for spending the day well is to keep all worldly thoughts out of your mind, till you have presented the first fruits of the day to God, in such-like pious sentences as those that follow:

AWAKE, O my soul, and sing praises to thy God. I laid me down and slept, and rose up again, for the Lord sustained me.

Lord, raise me up at the last day, that I may enter into the joy of thee, my Lord.

Awake, O my soul, to righteousness, and sin not; that we may be glorified together, when I shall be awakened by the last trumpet to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Glory be to thee, O, Lord, for watching over me this night past.

DIRECTIONS.

While your body is busied in dressing itself, adorn your mind with spiritual and religious meditations: and resolve to embrace every occasion that shall offer itself, for the service of God, the good of your neighbour, and the salvation of your own soul, in the course of that day. And when you are dressed, kneel down before God, and seal your good resolutions with the following prayer:

A preparatory prayer for God's grace and assistance.

ASSIST *me* mercifully O Lord, in all *my* supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of *me* thy servant toward the attainment of everlasting salvation: that among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, *I* may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

The Morning Prayer for Every Day.

MOST gracious Lord God, the spring of all *my* comforts here, and the sure and certain foundation of all *my* hopes hereafter, in whom *I* live, move, and have *my* being; look down from heaven upon *me*, who humbly beg leave to renew *my* thanks to thy divine majesty. I confess, that under thy protection *I* have this night slept secure; and praised be thy holy name, that *I am* now in health and safety; therefore as long as *I* live, *I* will magnify thee for *my* creation, *my* preservation, and all the blessings and comforts *I* enjoy. O most merciful Father, forgive *me* all the unworthy returns *I* have made for the manifold favours *I* have received from thee; and grant *me* for the time to come such a sense of thine infinite goodness and mercy, that *I* may love thee with all *my* heart, with all *my* soul, and with all *my* strength; that *I* may study to please thee in all things, and be afraid of nothing so much as thy wrath and indignation. And that *I* may serve thee as *I* ought to do, preserve *me* from all the power of ensnaring objects, and make *me* truly sensible of the vanity of this world; neither permit *me* to be brought under the dominion of those lusts, which war against the soul. Grant *me* a right understanding of thy will and grace, so to use this world, as not to abuse it; so that neither the cares of this life nor the deceitfulness of riches may ever make *me* neglect the great work of *my* salvation. Create in *me* O God, a clean heart, and root out thereof all covetous affections and desires; and let it be *my* great care and concern to lay up a treasure in heaven, and provide for eternity: so that being delivered from pride and vainglory, from a fond conceit of *myself*, or a mean opinion of others, from a censorious and uncharitable spirit, from an envious and malicious temper, and from all those sinful and corrupt affections, that are so hurtful in thy sight, *I* may be endued with that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure and then peaceable; with that meekness and humility, which is in thy sight of so great price; and with all those holy and christian dispositions that thou lovest, and which thou delightest to find in the sons of men. Grant *me* always a true sense of *my* own frailty, of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and of the eternity of that which is to come, that *I* may always be careful so to live, as *I* shall wish *I* had done when *I* come to die. Let neither sickness nor death ever surprise *me*, nor find *me* in a state unprovided: but grant that *I* may finish the great work of *my* salvation before the night comes, when no man can work; that so having laid up a good foundation of hope and comfort against the day of trouble and sickness, *I* may, whenever thou shalt be pleased to call *me* hence, cheerfully resign up *my* soul into thy hands. And this *I* most humbly pray through the merits and for the sake of thy dear son Jesus Christ, our saviour.

Assist *me* O Lord, this day in all *my* honest labours and endeavours, and grant that *I* may take nothing in hand but what is agreeable to thy blessed will. To thee also *I* humbly beg leave to commend *my* soul and body, and all that stand in any relation to *me*; beseeching thee of thy great goodness to take us under thy protection, to defend us from all evil, and to lead us in the way we should go; so that, while we are engaged about things temporal, we may not forget the things that are eternal, nor be unmindful of that great account which we must give when thou shalt call us to judgment at the last day. Leave us not to ourselves, but guard us from those snares and temptations that every where surround us in this body of corruption. Guide us by thy good spirit thro' the affairs and business of this life, that we may at last arrive at that place of everlasting rest and peace, which thou hast prepared for those who truly and sincerely love and fear thee, through the merits and intercession of thy beloved son Jesus Christ, our Lord; in

On Sunday Morning, instead *of the opposite Paragraph say,*

I bless thee also for the appointment of one day in seven for our rest, and thy more peculiar worship. Dispose *my* heart, O Lord, *I* humbly beseech thee, to a serious attendance upon thee in all holy duties. Make *me* duly mindful of all thy sacred institutions, and grant that *I* may never so far forget the interest of *my* soul, as to neglect the religious observance of the christian sabbath. And grant that *I* may observe it according to thy commandment, as a means to promote a holy and virtuous life, and to prepare *my* soul for the enjoyment of the most glorious and delightful praises, which is the happiness and employment of angels and the souls of just men made perfect. And wherein *I* have offended thee by *my* negligent performance of these holy duties, be not provoked to withdraw the assistance of thy holy spirit from *me*, and to leave *me* to the folly and vanity of *my* own will; but forgive *me* all *my* past offences, and mercifully hear *my* prayer, and let *my* cry come unto thee in the day of *my* necessity. Withdraw *my* mind from the care, and business, and pleasures of this life; that *I* may more freely attend upon the great concerns of a far better life, and that *my* prayers and praises, and all *my* services, may be offered up in such a serious and devout manner, as may render them acceptable in thy sight. Make *me* attentive to thy holy word, and to all the good instructions that shall this day be given *me:* and grant that *I* may not rest in any outward performances; but, by a right use of thy holy ordinances, may grow in grace, and every day improve in all virtuous and godly living, that when this short life shall have an end, *I* may dwell with thee in life everlasting. Preserve the universal church, and bless every christian assembly with thy gracious presence; hear the prayers they shall this day put up, and make the word effectual to the pulling down the kingdom of Satan, and to the building up of the church of Christ in sound faith and real virtue; that so thy word, coming with power into every conscience, may have a due and saving effect upon the minds of all that hear

whose most comprehensive words *I* offer up *my* imperfect prayers, saying,

Our Father, &c.

and read the same. Give a plentiful portion of thy good spirit unto all who by sickness, imprisonment, or any other impediment, are detained from partaking of the means of grace *I* enjoy; and mercifully relieve and help them in their straits and afflictions. And, O most gracious Father, pardon *my* sins and imperfections, and relieve all *my* necessities, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has taught *me* thus to pray:

Our Father, &c.

DIRECTIONS.

Here, if your time will permit, add the prayers of general Intercession *and* Thanksgiving, *as you find them in the pages following, before you use the* concluding prayer.

The concluding Prayer.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all now and for evermore. *Amen.*

The Intercession.

MOST gracious God, whose mercy is over all thy works, *I* beseech thee to extend thy pity and compassion to the whole race of mankind: let the bright beams of thy gospel shine into all the corners of the earth, that those who sit in darkness may come to the knowledge and practice of thy laws, and their souls be saved in the great day when thy son Christ Jesus shall come to judge the earth. And *I* most humbly pray, that thou wilt pardon the great and crying sins of this nation, and turn from us the evils which we have most justly deserved; stop all profaneness, irreligion and impiety, and compose all our unhappy animosities, so that truth and justice, brotherly love and charity, may ever flourish and abound. Defend thy holy catholic church, especially that part of the communion of saints which thou hast planted in these states, and heal the breaches and divisions thereof. Preserve thy servant the President of these United States, and make him an instrument in thy hand, of great good to this nation. Direct the pastors and governors of thy church with a spirit of true religion and goodness, and make them zealous and diligent to promote it in all those whom thou hast committed to their care. Endue the magistrates and people of this nation with wisdom, grace, and understanding, that they may all study to serve thee, and to discharge the duties of their several stations, always remembering that great account which they must one day give at the judgment-seat of Christ. Relieve all that are in any affliction or distress; that labour under poverty or persecution, under bodily pains or diseases, or under temptation or trou-

ble of mind; and in thy good time deliver them out of all their troubles. Bless with the choicest of thy graces all *my* friends and relations [particularly *my* father and mother, *my* brothers and sisters, *my* dear wife and children; *if you have any such near relations*] pardon all our sins, unite our hearts in a mutual love of each other, and vouchsafe to every one of us, and to all others that either pray for *me* or desire *my* prayers, whatever thy infinite wisdom knows to be most expedient for us. Requite all those who have been in any wise instrumental to *my* good, according to their works; and forgive those that have done or wished *me* evil, and grant them repentance and better inclinations. All which *I* offer up to thee, and humbly beseech thee to grant, for the sake and through the merits of thy dearly beloved son Jesus Christ, Our Lord. *Amen.*

The Thanksgiving.

ALMIGHTY God, father of all mercies, *I* offer up unto thy divine majesty *my* unfeigned praises, in return for all those numberless benefits which thou hast vouchsafed unto *me:* but *I* more particularly bless and glorify thy holy name for the mercies I have received; for my deliverance from sin, and the temptations which have been conquered by *me*, and for all the good that *I* have done; for preserving *me* in health and safety, for the plentiful provision which *I* enjoy by thy goodness, and for continuing to *me* the enjoyment of so many comforts; as also for delivering *me* from the evils which *I* have most justly deserved, and to which *I am* continually exposed by the weakness of *my* nature and the power of the enemy. Yet above all *I* laud and magnify thy glorious name for the incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of *my* saviour, thy son Jesus Christ, who is the foundation of all thy mercies, and the author and finisher of my faith; in whose name alone *I* have a right to pray to thee, and to sum up all *my* prayers and praises, saying,

Our Father, &c.

DIRECTIONS.

Then rising from your knees, if your time and business will permit, improve your soul by reading some portion of holy scripture, more especially of the New Testament. *But first beseech your heavenly Father to assist you with his holy spirit, that you may so understand and practise his word, that it shall make you wise unto salvation, in some such form as here followeth:*

A Prayer for the right use of the Holy Scriptures.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that *I* may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience, and comfort of thy holy word, *I* may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed

hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given *me* in our saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

DIRECTIONS.

In reading the great mysteries of faith, prostrate your reason to revelation, and lift up your heart continually to God in some short sentence agreeable to the subject you are reading after the manner following. And reading a little at a time, digest it well for your comfort and practice. And if time shall permit, read some part of this New Whole Duty of Man; *for variety is found, not only to please, but to be the best way to instruct human nature.*

Ejaculations, to be used while reading the Scripture.

LORD, deliver *me* from this temptation, this sin, or this judgment.

Lord, give *me* grace to obey this command.

Glory to thee, O Lord, for this mercy.

Lord, grant *me* thy grace to make my calling and election sure.

DIRECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR EVENING.

At night spare some time, before you go to bed, for your devotions; and laying aside all business and company, retire to your closet, and begin with this prayer.

The Preparatory Prayer.

O God, send into *my* soul thy holy spirit, to help *my* infirmities; and so dispose my mind, and prepare *my* heart, that *my* prayers and praises may be acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

DIRECTIONS.

To this add the prayer in page 488, for a right use of the holy scriptures; *and then read some portion of* holy scripture, *and of this* New Whole Duty of Man, *in the manner directed just above. And having composed your thoughts, pray to God to enlighten your memory in the examination of your past life, saying,*

A Prayer for Sincerity in the Examination and Acknowledgment of our Sins to God.

O Eternal God, who searchest the hearts, and triest the reins of man, who knowest his thoughts long before, dispose *me* frequently to examine the state of *my* own mind, and to compare *my* actions

with the rule of thy laws. Raise in *me* an abhorrence of whatever offends thee, that I may always turn *my* feet unto thy testimonies; and let neither self-love, sloth, negligence, nor any other darling passion, so impose upon or divert *me* from searching into the corruptions of *my* own heart, as to escape *my* repentance: but vouchsafe *me* the assistance of thy holy spirit, that *I* may so impartially judge and condemn *myself*, that *I* may not be condemned at thy fearful judgment-seat, and that in a full discovery of *my* own vileness *I* may humble *myself* under the rod of thy divine justice, and from *my* heart condemning all those follies whereby I have provoked thy wrath and indignation against *me*, I may earnestly solicit thy pardon and forgiveness, through the merits of thy son Jesus Christ, our Lord, *Amen*.

DIRECTIONS.

Then examine your conscience by this short method.

A short Form of Examination of Conscience.

WHAT sin have I this day committed in thought, word, or deed?

What opportunity of doing good have I neglected?

Have I omitted, or carelessly performed, any of *my* religious duties?

Have I done any injustice to *my* neighbour, in his body, family, goods, or reputation?

Am I willing to make him restitution, as *I am* able?

Am I ready, as God has forgiven *me* in Christ Jesus, to forgive such as have offended *me?*

DIRECTIONS.

To the above may be added such other questions as your particular circumstances may require. Then confess your guiltiness to God in this or some such form, as follows:

A Form of Confession.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, I have erred and strayed from thy ways like a lost sheep. I have followed too much the devices and desires of *my* own heart. I have offended against thy holy laws. I have left undone those things which I ought to have done; and I have done those things, which I ought not to have done; and there is no health in *me*. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon *me*, a miserable offender. Spare *me*, O God, who confess *my* faults; cleanse *me* from all *my* secret and unknown transgressions, and be reconciled unto *me*, who am heartily sorry for *my* sins, and grieved that I have offended thee. Reserve not *my* sins to be punished in the day of thy fierce anger; but spare *me*, and grant that I may never fall into those evils, which my sins have justly

deserved of thy justice. Restore *me* that am penitent: according to thy promises declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesu, our Lord. And, as there is nothing I so much desire as to be of the number of thine elect; for thy favour is better than life itself, and the most perfect freedom is not to be compared to thy service; grant *me* strength by the assistance of thy holy spirit to forsake all my sins, and to reform whatever has been amiss in the temper and disposition of *my* mind, or in any of the actions of *my* life; that when I depart hence, I may be received into that blessed state, where sin and death shall have no dominion over *me*. All which I beg for the sake and in the name of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

DIRECTIONS.

After which acknowledgment of our own corruption and unworthiness, renew your resolution of amendment, and beg for mercy through Christ; and this with as much devout earnestness, as if death was as near approaching as your sleep, which, for aught you know, may be so indeed; and therefore you should no more venture to go to bed and to sleep unrecommended to God, then you would dare to die in that miserable state.

Then offer up unto God the tribute of your evening sacrifice of prayer *and* thanksgiving; *as well for his* usual *and* daily *preservations, as for his* extraordinary *deliverances: and above all, endeavour by the consideration of his mercies to have your heart the more closely knit to him, remembering that every favour received from God is a new engagement upon you to love and obey him still more and more.*

The Evening Prayer for Every Day.

O Most glorious God, although I know that thou hatest iniquity with a perfect hatred, *yet I am* assured also that thou delightest in the ways of mercy; that thou art a tender lover of souls; and not only permittest, but invitest us, miserable creatures, to come unto the throne of thy grace. Therefore, O Lord, with humble confidence I lift up *my* soul unto thee, beseeching thee not to cast *me* away from thy presence; but, for the sake of *my* dear redeemer, receive *me* graciously to thy mercy, and let the merit of his bitter death and passion atone for all my follies and miscarriages. Pardon, I meekly beseech thee, whatever I have done amiss this day, and all *my* life past, either against thee, *my* neighbour or *myself*. Convince *me* truly, O Lord, of the great folly and danger of sin, and make *me* so afraid of offending thee, that I may abstain from all appearance of evil, and do nothing but what is pleasing in thy sight. Let the interest of *my* immortal soul be *my* chief care and concern; and grant, that I may live as becomes the gospel of Christ, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world. But, forasmuch as without thee I *am* not able to please thee, grant *me* the assistance of thy grace and holy spirit, that I may pass through all the temptations of this world with peace, and innocence, and safety; enable me to

bear up, with courage and resolution, against all the assaults of *my* great adversary the devil, who is daily lying in wait to destroy *me*. Cleanse *me* from all my secret and unknown transgressions: and grant that I may seriously consider and reflect upon the foulness and deformity of sin, and what dreadful threatenings thou hast denounced against it, that I may become a true and sincere mourner for my past sins; and as far as is possible, redeem *my* misspent time, by employing the remainder of *my* days in thy service and to thy glory. Teach *me* so to number *my* days, that I may become wise unto salvation; and give me that hatred and abhorrence of sin and iniquity, that I may abstain from every kind and sort of evil. [*On Sunday.* Cause thy word, which I have heard or read, to abide in my heart, and to bring forth the fruits of a holy and religious life. And if I have come without due preparation to thy holy worship, I now present *myself* before thee, acknowledging this and all *my* manifold sins, by which I have deserved thy just displeasure and indignation; and humbly pray thee, for Jesus Christ's sake, to forgive all that is past, to guide *me* in the ways of truth and holiness, and to help *me* to set thee always before *my* eyes, that I may always fear and dread to offend thee.] Breathe into *me*, O Lord a new heart, new affections, and new desires, that I may love thee with more sincerity, and serve thee with greater faithfulness, than I have ever yet done. Open *my* eyes to behold the vanity and uncertainty of all things here below; and vouchsafe that I may make thee *my* only joy and *my* delight, *my* stay and *my* trust, *my* guide and *my* counsellor. Grant that in the days of health and prosperity I may consider my latter end, and remember and provide for that great account which I must one day give before the judgment-seat of Christ: that when the hour of my departure shall come, I may meet death without fear or amazement, and with a well-grounded hope of thy mercy and goodness, may cheerfully resign *my* soul into thy hands, when thou, *my* God, in thy great wisdom, shall see it fitting to call *me* to thyself. Extend thy mercy, O God, to all mankind; have pity upon all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics, and bring them to the light, and knowledge, and practice of thy laws. Bless thy holy catholic church, and especially those parts of it which thou hast planted in this nation; remove out of it all errors and corruptions, all divisions and dissentions; and grant that the lives of christians may be holy and exemplary, and such as become the gospel of our blessed saviour. Reform all things amiss in these United States: root out from among us all irreligion and profaneness, all uncharitableness and animosities; pardon our great and crying sins; avert the evils that we have deserved; continue the light of the glorious gospel among us, and give us grace to turn from the evil of our ways, unto thee, the Lord our God; that thou may delight over us, to do us good; to build us up, and not to destroy us. Bless thy servant, the President of these states, and all others in authority; make them all, in their several places and stations, useful and serviceable to thy glory, and the good and welfare of thy church and nation. And thou, who art the father of mercies and origin of all comfort, look down with pity and compassion upon

thy afflicted servants every where; give them courage and patience, comfort and support in thee, and, in thy good time, a joyful deliverance out of all their troubles. Be gracious to all *my* friends and relations [particularly to *my* father, mother, brothers, sisters, &c. *if you have any*;] do good unto those that have at any time done or wished us evil; and, as thou art thoroughly acquainted with all our wants, vouchsafe unto every one of us, and to all christians, whatever thou knowest to be best and most fitting both for our temporal and eternal welfare. And now, O Lord, I humbly beseech thee to accept of *my* unfeigned praises for all thy blessings, for *my* health and safety, and all the comforts of *my* life; for the redemption of mankind, and the means and hopes of glory, which proceed from thy bounty and goodness. To thee therefore I ascribe all possible praise and thanksgiving, humbly beseeching thee to grant *me* the continuance of thy mercy and goodness, and to take *me*, and all that belong to *me*, this night under thy care and protection, preserving us from all perils and dangers, and giving us such refreshing rest and sleep, as may fit us for the duties of the day following; and if thou art pleased to add another day to our lives, grant that we make a right use and improvement thereof, to thy glory, and the benefit of our immortal souls, through JesusChrist our Lord, in whose name and words I further pray, saying, *Our Father*, &c. &c.

DIRECTIONS.

Here, if time permits, add the prayers of Intercession *and* Thanksgiving *on pages* 487 *and* 488, *before you use the* concluding prayer.

The concluding Prayer.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with *me* for evermore.—*Amen.*

Ejaculations or short Sentences to be said in Bed.

I Will lay me down in peace and take my rest; for it is thou, O Lord, only that maketh me dwell in safety.

Into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Hide me, O Lord, under the shadow of thy wings, and grant me peace this night and evermore.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, now, and at the hour of death.—*Amen.*

OCCASIONAL PRAYERS.

A Morning Prayer to be used by a young Person.

ALMIGHTY God, who art the kind author of my being, so inspire me with that wisdom which is from above, that I may constantly walk in the ways of thy laws, and in the work of thy commandments, that I may be preserved from all temptations and the ways of the destroyer. Accept of my unfeigned thanks for all the blessings I daily receive from thee, and particularly for my preservation and refreshment in the night past. Have mercy upon me and forgive me all my sins; and give me grace to flee from all youthful passions and sinful desires, and that I may always walk as in thy presence, ever mindful of my latter end. Bend my heart with that awful tenderness for my parents, and for those that have the care of me, and with that christian sense of my duty toward them, that my language may be respectful, my actions dutiful, and my whole behaviour such, that I may prove a comfort and blessing to them, who take so much care of me. Help me ever to remember the christian principles which I have learned, and the pious instructions which have been given me, and never to depart from the good way in which I have been taught to walk. Incline my heart to all that is good: grant that I may be modest and humble in my carriage and behaviour; chaste and pure in all my thoughts, words, and actions; true and just in all my dealings; respectful and obedient to my superiors; innocent and inoffensive in my whole conversation; faithful and diligent in the discharge of all the duties of that state and condition of life wherein thou hast placed me: and teach me to fear thee, and love thee, my God, above all things; and to do to all others, as I would they should do unto me. Make me perfectly contented with my condition, and thankful to thee who hast given me all things necessary for life and godliness. Let thy good providence always take care of me, and let me never place my trust and confidence in any thing but in thee. Deliver me from sloth and idleness, bad company, and from all dangers both of body and soul; that I may increase daily in the knowledge and love of thee my God, and of thy son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Accept of my humble petition for [*my father, mother, brethren, sisters*, &c. *if ye have any*] all my friends and relations, all this family, and the whole race of mankind: and grant unto us all those graces and blessings, which thou knowest to be most needful for the attainment of everlasting life. And now, O Lord, I freely offer unto thee my soul and my body, beseeching thee to take them into thy care and protection, that they may be always employed in thy service and to thy glory; and, having faithfully served thee in this life, that I may at last obtain life everlasting, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ who has taught his disciples thus to pray, *Our Father*, &c.

An Evening Prayer to be used by a young Person.

MOST mighty Lord and everlasting God, I most humbly beseech thee to pardon me in whatsoever I have offended thee this day, either in thought, word or deed, [*here mention such particulars as you can remember.*] Enable me to resist and subdue every evil inclination within, and every outward temptation. Assist me daily with thy Holy Spirit, to increase in the knowledge and love of thee my God, and of my Saviour Jesus Christ. Teach me the paths of thy commandments while I am young. Sanctify whatever good instructions I have at any time received from the piety and care of my parents, guardians, and teachers; help me carefully to remember them, and seriously to practise them. And I praise thy holy name for all the blessings thou hast this day, or at any time shown me; for all the helps of preventing or restraining grace thou hast vouchsafed me; for whatever I have done, which may be in any measure acceptable to thee; for all the progress I have made in my learning: for thy preservation of me from all the calamities and dangers, which frail mortality is every moment exposed unto; and particularly for [*here mention any particular blessings you recollect God has bestowed upon you this day.*] Take, I humbly pray thee, my soul and body into thy care this night; bless and protect me; and all the mercies which I beg for myself, I heartily desire for all my friends and relations, and for all men; that we may be all so guided in this present life, as to arrive safe in thy heavenly kingdom, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our saviour; in whose most holy name and words I further call upon thee, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

A Morning Prayer to be used by a Servant.

O God, the great creator and preserver of all mankind, I bless and praise thy holy name for all thy mercies to my soul and body; and as thou hast given me another day, give me grace to spend it to thy honor and glory. I confess my corruption; do thou confirm and strengthen me; create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Inflame my heart with thy holy faith and love, that I may delight in thy commandments; that I may walk before thee in uprightness and fear; in faithfulness and honesty; constantly and cheerfully depending upon thee, and doing the duty of my station, not with eye service, but with singleness of heart; as knowing that I shall be accountable to thee at the last day, as well for those duties which I owe my master and mistress, as for those which are more immediately to be paid to thee, my creator, preserver, and future Judge. Keep my tongue from all opprobrious and reproachful language; from all lying and slandering; and my hand from all injustice and deceit, that I may neither waste my time nor spare my labour, which are my master's by contract and agreement. Give me always

a thankful, humble, and contented spirit. Send thy blessing upon this whole family to which I belong; sow in all our hearts the seeds of unfeigned charity, that we may enjoy the comforts of mutual affection, and assistance and aid in our several stations; and grant that we may meet in the family of heaven, there to adore and praise thee, love and enjoy thee, to all eternity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; in whose most holy name and words I presume to say, *Our Father*, &c.

An Evening Prayer to be used by a Servant.

THOU, O God, art my strength, and the rock of my salvation: it is true, that thou hast called me to be a servant, but thou hast called me to be a son also, and an heir of eternal life; yet I have forgotten thee, being more solicitous for the bread that perishes, than for thy favour, which is better than all the world. I have sinned against my knowledge, thy word, and the motions of the Holy Ghost, by repining and murmuring at thy providence, and being discontented with my condition, [*here mention your particular sins.*] Of which, O my God, and of all my sins, I repent, and humbly beg the assistance of thy grace, that I may do works meet for repentance, and serve thee in truth, and with an upright heart, all the days I have to live. O Lord have mercy upon me, and forgive me all my offences; enable me to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and sincerely to endeavour to reform and amend my life, that I may every day grow and increase in goodness and be so much the fitter for death, the nearer I approach thereto — Watch over me, and the whole family to which I belong: let thine angels pitch their tents about us this night, that we may lie down securely; and let our sleep be sweet and refreshing to us, for Jesus Christ's sake; in whose most holy name and words I beg all things that I am any way bound to pray for, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

A Prayer for Faith in God.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, give unto me the increase of faith, that I may obtain that which thou dost promise; and make me heartily to believe what thou hast revealed, and to love that which thou dost command, through Jesus Christ our Lord.— *Amen.*

A Prayer for Hope in God.

O God, in whom is all my dependence, and the hope of all the ends of the earth: let me never be destitute of a well grounded hope, nor yet possessed with a vain presumption: suffer me not to think that thou wilt either be reconciled to my sins, or reject my repentance: but grant me such a hope, as may be answerable to thy righteous promises, even such a hope, as may encourage and enable

me to purify myself from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, that so it may indeed bring me to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Love of God and his Laws.

MOST mighty Lord God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men: and hast set before us life and death, blessing and cursing; and not only endued us with a liberty to choose the one, and avoid the other, but annexed a present as well as future reward to our obedience to thy laws; so that the ways of religion are made ways of pleasantness, and all its paths to be peace: give me wisdom and understanding that I may avoid the deceitful pleasures of this world, and may see, know, and choose the things which make for my peace, and in which my true and only happiness does consist. Confirm in me this saving knowledge, that sin is the greatest of all evils; that guilt and misery are always inseparable; and that a good conscience, and the hopes of thy favour and acceptance, are the only solid happiness to be attained in this life. Grant unto me thy servant, that I may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise. Make me stedfast and immoveable in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments; that so among the sundry and many changes of the world, my heart may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; and that I may at last be received into the inheritance of the saints in light, through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ our mediator and advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Sincerity towards God.

ALMIGHTY God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, and dost not only require outward acts of duty, but the inward disposition of the mind; teach me in all my religious actions always to have an eye to thy authority, to obey thy laws, and to make the sense of my duty the prevailing motive of my piety; so that no privacy or retirement may encourage me to offend thee, nor any losses or crosses may hinder me from doing or suffering thy blessed will and pleasure. Grant me always that sincerity of intention, that devotion may not be made a pretext to cheat or defraud my neighbour; nor yet the exercise of justice and mercy towards men be made a plea for the neglect of my duty towards thee, my God; and that my charity to the poor may never serve to cover my intemperance; nor my sobriety exempt me from feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, when it is in my power. And finally, vouchsafe to grant, that all the duties thou commandest may be shown forth by my actions; that, my greatest desire and aim being thy glory, I may be accepted by thee through the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Sincerity towards Men.

GRANT, O Lord, that in all my dealings and conversation with my fellow creatures, I may always use true simplicity and singleness of heart, and never compass any design by false devices and appearances; nor betray my neighbour, by not performing my promise; and that I may never deceive men into a false opinion of themselves, by representing them to be better than I know them to be; nor permit my tongue to speak otherwise than out of the abundance of my heart; so that my outward actions may be exactly agreeable to my purposes and intentions: and this I beg in the name of thy son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Humility.

MOST gracious God, who has sent thy beloved Son to take upon him our human nature, that he might be to us a perfect pattern of humility: enable me by thy grace, to imitate the same.—Make me sensible of my own vileness by reason of my sins, which are evident proofs of my weakness and folly; and of my baseness and ingratitude, which render me contemptible in thy sight, and ought to cover my soul with shame and confusion, instead of pride and vanity. Check all my vain and aspiring thoughts, and wean me from any fond opinion of my own abilities and excellencies.—Strengthen my faith and good resolutions, that I may never purchase the praise of men by mean flatteries and sinful compliances; nor ever entertain their applause, even upon the best account, with too great delight, lest it corrupt the purity of my intentions, and rob me of that reward thou hast promised to all those that glorify thy name. And especially, I pray, make me patiently to bear the indignities I may receive from others: because I have deserved them from thee, and because thy Son has suffered the same upon my account. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Fear of God.

ALMIGHTY God, whose power is infinite, and whose judgments are to be feared, possess my soul with a holy awe and reverence towards thee, that I may give thee the honor due unto thy name, and never profane any holy thing, nor sacrilegiously invade what thou hast set apart for thy service. I believe that, as thou art infinite in justice, thou wilt not clear the guilty; which should make me tremble at the very thought of whatever offended thee: therefore let me not so misplace my fear as to be afraid of man; but fill my soul with that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom; that I may thereby bridle all my brutish appetites, and keep myself in a constant conformity to thy holy laws: and this I

humbly beseech thee to grant unto me thy servant, in the name of Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Trust in God.

MOST merciful God, give me grace in all difficulties and distresses to have recourse unto and to depend on thy power, goodness, and promises. And, as thou hast promised to keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee, suffer not my heart to be overcharged with the cares of this life; but grant that having by honest industry and all lawful means done my part, I may cheerfully commit myself to thy providence, casting all my care upon thee; and that seeking first thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof, I may stedfastly trust in thee for such a measure of these outward things as thou, in thy wisdom, seest to be most expedient for my advancement to the kingdom of thy Son; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer for our Benefactors.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who makest me both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable to thy divine majesty; I make my humble supplications to thee for all my benefactors. Let thy fatherly hand, I beseech thee, ever be over them; let thy holy spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Acts of Contrition, with Petitions for Pardon and Grace, that we may reform and amend our lives.

O Lord, remember not the sins and offences of my youth, but according to thy mercy think thou upon me.

For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults.

Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Shew me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths.

Pity, O Lord, the present frailty of thy servant, and suffer not my blindness to lead me into ruin.

Suffer not my frailties to become habitual, lest I die impenitent, and perish without recovery.

O thou great Physician of souls, cure me of all my sinful distempers, and fix me in an even and constant holiness.

Imprint on my mind this important truth, That the pleasures of sin are short and momentary, but the pain and torment eternal: and that the best that can follow is a bitter repentance.

Almighty Lord God, mortify and kill all vices in me; and so strengthen me with thy grace, that by the innocency of my life, and the constancy of my faith, I may glorify thy great and holy name.

Grant me the true circumcision of the spirit, that, my heart and all my members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will.

Grant that I, being regenerate, and made thy child by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by the holy spirit, till I come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ unto a perfect man.

Enable me to love my enemies, and to do good to those that hate me, and to pray for them that despitefully use me, and persecute me; in obedience to the command, and in imitation of the example, of my great Lord and Master Christ Jesus.

A Prayer for a meek and quiet Spirit.

O Father almighty, and God of all comfort, look with the tenderest pity upon me, a weak and frail creature, who am encompassed about with many and great infirmities. My nature is corrupt; my passions are strong and violent, and I am so prone to peevishness and anger, that almost every slight provocation disorders my mind. This is what I bewail and lament, humbly beseeching thee to pardon all this my sin and folly, and to give me a meek and quiet spirit, a patient and forgiving temper, and a humble, charitable, and christian disposition; that my mind may at all times be quiet and easy, my carriage gentle, kind, and obliging unto all men; and the whole conduct and deportment of my life such as becomes the disciples of the meek and blessed Jesus; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, for ever. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Chastity.

HOLY, holy, holy Lord God of hosts! who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, whose holy spirit delighteth to dwell in pure and chaste hearts; I most humbly beseech thee to send thy spirit of purity and holiness into my heart, and to preserve me chaste and spotless, clean and undefiled in thy sight; that my body may be a holy temple, and my soul a sanctuary fit for the reception of thy divine holiness. Forgive me all my past impurities, whether in thought, word, or deed; reprove in me the spirit of lust; kindle the fire of thy holy love in my heart, and let it consume all my

dross; that I may no more grieve thy blessed spirit by any work of darkness; but, after a chaste and religious life here, I may be presented before thy tribunal, washed and cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, and reign with thee for ever. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Temperance.

O God, who madest every thing good, and givest all things richly to enjoy; give me the spirit of temperance and sobriety, that I may use thy creatures in the same measure, and to the same purposes, for which thou hast designed them. Forgive that intemperance, which I have been guilty of in meat, drink, apparel, and pleasure, [particularly, *here mention what you are most guilty of*] and never let my body any more be oppressed with surfeiting and drunkenness, or the luxuries of this sensual life. Subdue, my appetite to reason and to thy grace, that my table may be no more a snare unto me, nor my food become a temptation, a sin, or a disease; but that I may henceforward hunger and thirst after righteousness, and account it my meat and drink to do thy will, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Patience.

O God, who hast told us, that in this world we should have tribulation; grant that my present affliction may work patience, and that I may be submissive under the load thou hast thought fit to lay upon me, whether it be thy immediate correction, or the injuries with which my fellow creatures endeavour to oppress me: and forasmuch as I suffer no more than the common lot of all sinful mortals, strengthen me, O Lord, that no pains or sufferings ever drive me from thee; but rather be a means to work in me a contempt of this world, a mortification of my lusts, and a patient abiding of the cross: so that I may finish my course with joy, and, at the last, rest from all my labours and troubles, with the redeemed and blessed of the Lord; which I wait and humbly beg for at thy hands, O most gracious Father, for the sake and in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Diligence.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast commanded man to till the earth, and to provide for his subsistence by his own labour and industry, when thou mightest justly have punished him eternally; enable me to fulfil thy command; and with care, diligence, and honest industry, grant that I may provide for myself and those committed to my charge, by improving the talent thou hast intrusted me with; and that I may make my calling and election sure, by a patient continuance in well-doing: that so labouring in thy work here, I may, not for the merit of my own works, but for the merits of Jesus Christ, rest from my labours in thy kingdom hereafter. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the love of our Neighbour.

MOST merciful God, suffer me to exclude none from my charity, who are objects of thy mercy and tenderness; but grant that I may assist all my brethren with prayers and good intentions, where I cannot reach them by works of mercy. Let me be always ready to embrace all occasions that may administer to their happiness, by assisting the needy, protecting the oppressed, instructing the ignorant, and reproving the wicked, profane and evil doers; but in such a manner that I may look upon the defects and frailties of my neighbour, as if they were my own, and so hide and conceal them: so that making thy love to me, O God, the pattern of my love to them, I may above all things endeavour to promote their eternal salvation; and at last be received into the joy of thy kingdom, and sing everlasting praises to the Lamb that was slain, and sitteth on the throne, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Charity.

O Lord, who hast taught me, that all my doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thy only son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer for true Piety and Regeneration.

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in my heart the love of thy name, increase in me true religion, nourish me with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep me in the same; so that being regenerate, and made thy child by adoption and grace, I may daily be renewed by thy holy spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth ever, with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a right Use of our Time.

MOST gracious God, I adore thy infinite goodness and patience, which hath not cut me off in the midst of my follies and sins. Grant therefore, gracious Lord, that I may no longer abuse that precious time, which thou hast allotted me, to secure that happiness, which is great in itself, and infinite in its continuance. Call me from all those vain amusements, those trifling entertainments, and cruel diversions, which have robbed me of many valuable hours, and have endangered the loss of my immortal soul in the day of judgment. Teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom; so that by diligence and honesty in my

calling, by constancy and fervour in my devotions, by moderation and temperance in my pleasures and recreations, by justice and charity in all my words and actions, and by keeping a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, I may be able to give a good account thereof, when summoned before the judgment-seat of Christ, when I pray that I may be accepted through the merits of thy son Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Care of the Soul.

GIVE me grace, O Lord, to prefer the good of my soul before all things, and continually to remember, that although it cannot die, it may sink into a state of endless punishment. Free me from the harms and flatteries of this world, lest they dissolve me into luxury, excess, and other unlawful pleasures: neither permit the terrors or torments that wicked men are able to inflict, to shake my constancy, or interrupt my perseverance in the way of thy laws; but grant that I may proceed in the strength thou hast given me, that, being found stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, I may know that my labour is not in vain in the Lord, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Government of the Tongue.

GOVERN my lips, O Lord, that I offend not in my tongue, and shut out such discourses as border the least upon evil speaking, lying, and slandering; that it may never spread any evil reports concerning my neighbour's reputation; nor make the deformity of his body, or the weakness of his mind, the subject of mirth and raillery. Grant that I may never be so weak as to encourage backbiters, either by listening to their insinuations, or by giving credit to their wicked inventions. But, as thou hast given me a tongue that I might praise thee, and influence others to bless thy holy name, direct my words chiefly to the promoting of thy glory: by assuaging the pains of the afflicted, vindicating the injured reputation of my neighbour, uniting the minds of those that are at variance, instructing those that know thee not enough, entertaining all the world with thy greatness and goodness, inflaming all hearts with thy love, and provoking them to praise thee, to bless thee, and to glorify thee; that I may one day mingle my praises with those of thy elect, translated to the mansions of eternal bliss, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used on fasting Days, and during the forty Days in Lent.

O God, the Father, who didst send thy beloved Son into this world, for the sake of all mankind, and in human nature didst appoint him to fast forty days and forty nights; give me grace to use

such abstinence, that, my flesh being subdued to the spirit, I may ever obey thy godly motions, in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, and the salvation of my own soul, through the merits and mediation of the same thy son Jesus Christ, who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer for true Mortification.

ALMIGHTY God, who madest thy beloved Son to be circumcised and obedient to the law for man; grant me the true circumcision of the spirit, that, my heart and all my members being mortified from all worldly and fleshly lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will, through the same thy son Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Repentance.

O Most mighty God, and merciful Father, who hast compassion upon all men and hatest nothing that thou hast made; who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin and be saved; mercifully forgive me my trespasses; receive and comfort me, whom thou hast redeemed; enter not into judgment with thy servant, who am vile earth, and a miserable sinner: but so turn thine anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my vileness, and truly repent me of my faults, and so make haste to help me in this world, that I may ever live with thee in the world to come, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Assistance of Grace.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept my prayers; and because, through the weakness of my mortal nature, I can do no good thing without thee, grant me the help of thy grace, that, in keeping thy commandments, I may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer against inordinate Anger.

O God, give to thy servant a meek and gentle spirit, that I may always be slow to anger, and easy to help and forgive; grant that I may not be moved to intemperate wrath on every trifling occasion; preserve me from a peevish and contentious spirit, and suffer me not so far to give place to the devil, as to bear hatred and malice in my heart; and grant that I may follow peace with all men, being meek, humble, and merciful, bearing with the infirmities of others, and forgiving their offences, as I desire to be forgiven of thee, through the merits of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer under Losses and Damages in our Goods and Estates.

ALMIGHTY God, the creator and preserver of all mankind, the world is thine and the fulness thereof. Teach me to be content as well when I am abased and suffer need, as when I abound: for, as it will profit a man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his soul; so all the losses in the world cannot undo him, whose soul is safe in thy hand. Let me not grieve, therefore, as if I were undone, for what I have lost; but incline my heart to commit myself cheerfully unto thee, as knowing that I have in heaven a better and an enduring substance of good things to come. And, seeing how little any thing is to be confided in here on earth, grant that I may look less on temporal things; and so provide for the good of my soul, and be so rich towards God, that, when all here shall fail me, thou mayest be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; all which I humbly pray for, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer in Prosperity.

ALMIGHTY and most gracious God, who makest me to abound and to be full of thy good things, and surroundest me on every side with thy mercies, I acknowledge, bless, and praise thee for all thy special favours towards me; but whereas I know not what shall be on the morrow, nor how soon the sun may be hid from my eyes, I must not say in my prosperity, I shall never be moved. Grant that in the time of health, and peace, and prosperity, I may remember and provide for the time of trouble, sickness, and death, when the enjoyments of this world will be so far from being able to support and relieve me, that they will vanish away. Give me grace also not to abuse the good things of this world, but always to use them in humility, sobriety, and thy holy fear: and make me willing, as thou hast made me able, to refresh the bowels of such as want what I do enjoy; and as freely give, as I have received; that riches may not be kept to my hurt; but, as I have opportunity, enlarge my heart to do good unto all. If thou, O Lord, shouldst make me poor, or send me any other affliction, give me therewith a resigned and contented heart, that I may praise thy name always: and grant that whatever I here enjoy may never draw my heart from my duty, but that all my plenty may be blessed and secured to me with the fulness of thy grace: that so, being rich in good works, my soul may prosper, and be well in thy blessed favour, and made glad with thy saving mercy, and thy good acceptance of me, in and through the merits of thy son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be said by such as are poor and low in the World.

O God, I believe that for just and wise reasons thou hast allotted to mankind very different states and circumstances of life; and that all the temporal evils, which have at any time happened unto me are designed by thee for my benefit: therefore, though thou hast thought fit to place me in a mean condition, to deprive me of many conveniencies of life, and to exercise me in a state of poverty; yet thou hast hitherto preserved and supported me by thy good providence, and blessed me with advantages above many others, who labour under great troubles. And, O merciful Father, if thou seest fit, bless me with such a portion of the comforts and conveniencies of life, that thereby I may be enabled to go on more cheerfully in my station, to serve thee better, to love thee more and more, and to admire more thy wonderful bounty and loving kindness: grant me health and strength, and abilities suited to my circumstances, that I may honestly provide for myself; support me, that I fall not into extreme want; lay not more upon me, than thou shalt enable me to bear with patience; and supply the want of worldly blessings, by the comfort and support of thy good spirit, whereby I may be made perfect in every good work, become rich in faith, and an heir of thy kingdom. Grant, O Lord, that I may exercise all those christian graces and duties, which my present circumstances call for from me: let the sharpness of temporal wants put me upon considering what misery must attend the loss of my soul: let a sense of my poverty stir up eager desires after the true riches; and the less I have of this world, the more careful let me be to provide for the next, and to seek an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away; and let bodily hardships convince me of the great evil of spiritual wants. Inspire me with diligence and industry in my calling; and, when I have done my endeavour, make me to cast all my care on thee; that neither the contempt which vain persons wrongfully cast on poverty, nor any evil which I may endure, may tempt me to any dishonest way of living; but let me choose rather to be poor than wicked, and to want any thing rather than thy blessing. For which end clothe me with a meek, quiet and humble spirit, and a thorough contentedness in my present circumstances; that I may neither dare to repine at my own condition, nor envy the prosperity of others. Raise up my heart to look unto Jesus, who, to reconcile man to a state of poverty, chose to be born and live in a mean condition, enduring hunger, thirst, and cold, and not having where to lay his head: that by his example I may be encouraged to contemn the world; and through faith and patience having finished the race thou hast set before me, I may be received into the joy of my Lord, for the sake of thy blessed son Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer under any Injuries, Abuses, or Provocations.

O God, whose beloved son was evil-entreated, tempted, reviled, spit upon, mocked, and persecuted even unto death; and his blessed disciples had also trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, and of severe bonds and imprisonment; what then am I, that I should expect to escape the injuries, abuses, and provocations of this world? therefore, Lord, such as my folly and miscarriage have made to be my enemies, incline my heart to peace, and enable me to appease, and to gain them to my friendship: and such as hate me wrongfully, pardon their sin, open their eyes, purify their minds, and convert their hearts unto thee; that they may see their fault, be reconciled to thee, O God, and then live, as much as in them lieth, in peace with all men, that we may at last live together in heaven: and for this end mortify, I beseech thee, in all of us, the carnal mind, which is at enmity against thee, and all those lusts that war in our members, from which wars and fightings arise; and unite us all against the common enemy of our souls: to join all our hearts to thee, in thy true fear and love, that we may not meditate revenge, but study to be quiet: and this I humbly pray in the name of that great pattern of meekness, thy son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for our Persecutors.

O God, whose nature and property is always to have mercy, and to forgive, show mercy, I most humbly beseech thee, to all those that persecute me, though they show neither justice nor mercy towards me: pity their ignorance, remove those prejudices that blind their eyes, sweeten and soften their spirits, that they may no longer be carried away with malice and bitter passions; but dispose them by humility and meekness, and by a sincere love of truth and righteousness, to a joyful reception and acknowledgment thereof: that they may lay aside their errors, and resolutely profess thy holy faith; so that their repentance may turn away thy vengeance, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer against Covetousness.

ALMIGHTY God, the author and giver of all that I enjoy, govern my affections towards the things of this world, that no greediness of gain may tempt me to the least injustice, either by fraud or oppression; but that I may commit myself to thy providence in the use of honest endeavours; that, while I am supporting a dying body, I may remember I have an immortal soul, which immediately deserves my greatest care. Teach me to enjoy the good things thou hast given me, with temperance, thankfulness, and charity; and readily to part with them, rather than to forsake thy truth, or to make shipwreck of a good conscience towards God or man. Fix

my thoughts, my hopes, and my desires upon heaven and heavenly things; that having always in view that crown of glory, which thou hast laid up for me hereafter, I may press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and being strengthened by thy grace, and supported by thy holy spirit I may run with patience the race thou hast set before me; that, when the great day of retribution shall come, I may look up to my most merciful judge with joy and comfort, and may hear those blessed words pronounced unto me, Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. And this I beg in the name, and through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ.—*Amen.*

A Prayer for temporal Blessings, and Contentedness in any Condition.

BLESSED Lord, who knowest that while we are in this life we stand in need of its supplies, and hast promised to such as seek thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, the addition of all other necessaries; and also hast commanded us to ask of thee our daily bread, and to cast our care upon thee for all the things we have need of for our comfort and support; give me such health and wealth as shall be for my good, and, while I have life to be nourished, vouchsafe to grant, that I may not want the necessaries thereof: but enable me to provide honestly for myself, and add thy blessing to my labours; which if not sufficient to supply all my own necessities, do thou raise up friends and means to help me, that I may never be destitute of food and raiment; and give me grace to be content with that provision thy providence sees most convenient for me. Let neither prosperity be a means of my forgetting thee, nor adversity cause me to murmur against thy wise distributions to the sons of men. Teach me how to want, as well as how to live in plenty: and sanctify all the comforts thou hast or shalt please to bestow upon me, that I may use them to thy glory, and that they may raise in me that due praise which I offer to thee, my God, for all thy benefits to me and all the world, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used on our Birth-day.

O God, the creator and preserver of all mankind, by whose blessed will I was fearfully and wonderfully made in my mother's womb, and under whose blessed providence I have been kept up ever since I was born; I praise and magnify thy glorious name for thy great goodness towards me; humbly beseeching thee, that I may be taught to number my days, so as to apply my heart to heavenly wisdom: that I may know that I was born to serve thee the living God; that I may bewail my past sins, and spend the rest of my days, in a godly, righteous, and sober life; that I may finish the remainder of my days in thy fear and to thy glory; and that as thou

didst (as on this day) take me out of my mother's womb, to live here a little time, so thou mayst at the last day take me out of my grave, the womb of the earth, to live with thee for ever through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for an easy and happy Death.

O Most great and mighty God, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and who hast appointed for all men once to die; make me truly sensible of the frailty and uncertainty of my life, and teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto true wisdom: so that death may not surprise me unawares, nor find me unprovided; that, when the time of my departure shall come, I may look back upon a well-spent life with joy and comfort, and may meet death without fear and amazement. Strengthen my faith, and suffer me not at my last hour through any pains of body, or weakness of mind, to let go my dependence upon thee: but grant, O merciful Father, that I may be willing and even desirous to leave this world, when thou, my God, in thy great wisdom shall see it fitting; and that, after a life spent here in thy service, I may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through the merits and for the sake of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used by one tempted to Presumption.

O Righteous Lord, suffer me not to encourage myself in a groundless reliance upon thy favour, while in the mean time I am really unfit to receive thy holy spirit; neither let thy patience and forbearance hitherto with me work an expectation of my future happiness: but grant that I may make such a progress in holiness, as that I may falsely depend upon thy mercy and protection in this world, and thy promise of eternal happiness in the world to come, not for any merits or works of my own, but purely through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer.—*Amen.*

A Prayer to be used by one troubled in Mind or tempted to Despair.

ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I approach unto thee with confusion of face, to think that I should in any wise seem to distrust thy goodness and mercy, when I have so abundantly experienced thy great favours, and have thy promise that thou wilt hear the prayers of those that ask any thing in thy Son's name. O my God, pardon me this thought, and give me thy grace to prevent its growth; and to conquer the temptation that oppresses my heart with a fear and horrid dread, lest my portion is decreed among the reprobates. O mighty Lord, I know thou art able and willing

to save me a repenting sinner: therefore speak peace to my oppressed soul, and give me assurance that thou art reconciled to me in the Son of thy Love, and that thou art my sword and my shield at present, and wilt hereafter be my exceeding great reward. Lay not these doubts and fears to my charge; but so dispose my mind, and confirm my trust and confidence in thee, that a remembrance of my sins may never drive me to despair of thy mercy, but on the other hand force me to flee to my Saviour, to sue for his intercession on my behalf, and may put me upon an unwearied attendance on my duty, thereby to fit me for a sure confidence in his all-sufficient merits. And, most gracious God, do not only pardon all my transgressions, but convince me, before I go hence and be no more seen, that thou hast done it for my satisfaction and comfort; that so I may here rejoice in thy favour, before I am taken into the joy of my Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer in Time of Temptation.

ALMIGHTY God, and most merciful Father, who art greater than all things, and in whom I put my trust, send down thy help from above, and deliver me from the temptations that now attack me. O let me never be put to confusion, nor suffer me to be tempted above that I am able to bear; but make me a way to escape that I may not sin against thy divine majesty. Make me seriously to consider the great folly and danger of sin; that its pleasures are short, but that its punishments are endless and intolerable; that no satisfaction can compare with the joys of a good conscience, nor is any trouble like that of a wounded spirit. Give me a sure token of the terrible state of those who fall under the rod of thy displeasure. Convince my conscience of the sinfulness of what I am now tempted unto, and shew me its contradiction to thy will and my baptismal vows. Give me, I pray thee, the light of thy word, that I may not be deceived by this temptation, but certainly know, that, how pleasant soever it may now appear, there will come a time, when this and all other enticements of this world will appear vain and contemptible; a time, when all workers of iniquity shall be destroyed, and when a crown of righteousness shall be given to them who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith unto the end. Grant therefore that the mighty power of thy grace may so raise my courage, and strengthen my faith, that nothing may stop me in my christian warfare; but that fighting manfully, under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh and the devil, I may at last triumph with him in his heavenly kingdom; to whom, with thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used by one engaged (or likely to be engaged) in a Lawsuit.

ALMIGHTY God, to whom all judgments belong, to thee I submit myself, in the cause wherein I am [*likely to be*] engaged: convince me, if I am under any mistake; direct and assist me under all the difficulties and incumbrances which I am like to meet with; and in thy good time put a happy and peaceable end to the business which I [*am about to undertake*, or] have begun. Grant me that wisdom from above, which is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; that laying aside all fondness and partiality, I may continually practise that christian law, of doing as I would that others should do unto me: so that contending for right more than victory, nothing may be done through malice, strife, pride, or vainglory; nor may I be prevailed upon to transgress the laws of justice and charity for any worldly advantage; submitting the event to thy fatherly wisdom and disposition. Let the remembrance of thy mercies and forgiveness towards me fill my heart with such a christian love and compassion, that I may never contend with my neighbour to gratify my own corrupt nature, nor take delight in his sufferings: but let the sense of what thy beloved Son hath done and suffered for me, banish all covetous desires from my soul, and excite in me a compassion towards thy distressed members: for his sake forgiving my fellow servants, as I hope myself to be forgiven when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead at the last day. And this I most humbly beg for Jesus Christ's sake—*Amen.*

A Prayer to be used by one that deliberates upon Marriage.

MOST gracious God, who has instituted the holy estate of matrimony, as a means to continue the world, and for the comfort of man's life, under the various evils, cares and labours thereof, by the mutual society and help that married persons ought to have one for the other, both in prosperity and adversity, and for the good of human society in general; grant, that as I have now thoughts of entering into that state, I may so seriously consider the chief end of its institution, and the solemn vow and promise I shall then make as not to enterprise the same unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of thee; considering that if I marry, my future happiness and misery of life will very much depend upon the choice I make. Let not a wild and sensual, a heedless and inconsiderate spirit, rule me in this momentuous change of my life; but grant that reason and religion, prudence and consideration [*the advice of my parents or guardians*] and, above all, thy good providence, may direct my choice. And let me chiefly aim at piety and virtue, wisdom and discretion, and such other good qualities and dispositions in a partner, as are most

likely to continue, and not such as please only for a time, and at last may prove the cause of discontent. This I beg through the mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used by a Woman when with Child.

ALMIGHTY God, the fountain of life, I adore thy infinite wisdom, which has begun an excellent work in me, beseeching thee to perfect the same work of thy hand with due shape and full growth, and to preserve me from all frights and accidents which might cause me to miscarry of this child. Strengthen and enable me to go through all the pains and uneasiness of childbearing with patience and submission to thy will; and give me a humble trust and dependence on thy fatherly care and good providence.—Make me in thy good time a joyful mother of a hopeful child, which may be endued with an understanding soul, and blessed in mind as well as in body; that it may be able to know thy goodness, dread thy power and justice, and live to be an instrument of thy glory; and by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in its generation, may in thy good time be received into thy everlasting kingdom, and joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer before making a Will.

GIVE me time, O Lord, before I go hence and be no more seen to make such a discreet and prudent settlement of my worldly affairs, that I may do no injustice to any branch of my family. Be thou graciously pleased to entail a blessing upon the substance I shall leave behind me: and let those to whom I give and bequeath it, rise up like olive plants, and flourish under the protection of thy good providence. Let them not, like slothful servants, bury their talents in a napkin, or squander away their inheritance by riotous living; but let them endeavour, by an honest industry, in their several stations and employments, to support themselves creditably in this world, and so wisely to manage their temporal concernments, as may most effectually conduce to the eternal interest of their immortal souls, through Jesus Christ, our Lord *Amen.*

A Prayer for all Rulers and Magistrates.

ALMIGHTY Lord, by whom kings do reign, and princes decree justice, and who hast commanded me to pray for all that are in authority; I, both in duty and inclination, become a petitioner to thy divine majesty for thy servant, the President of the United States. Give thy judgments, O God, unto him, that he may rule over thy people righteously. Bless him with the spirit of government, to punish the wicked, and to reward the good. Make him sensible of his duty to thee, and our citizens obedient to the laws, for

thy sake. Fill his heart with thy fear and love, that the righteous may flourish in his days, and abundance of peace, with the liberty and free possession of the gospel. Defend him from all secret conspiracies and open violence. Bless his lawful measures and the country with success. Direct all his councils, and prosper all his endeavours for the welfare of this nation; so that his government may flourish with happiness and prosperity. And finally, grant that he may so rule on earth, that he may live with thee in thy heavenly kingdom for evermore. Bless all our magistrates with spirits suitable to their stations; and make all that are put in authority truly and impartially to administer justice, for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and for the maintenance of order, and thy true religion and virtue: endue them with wisdom to understand, with hearts to consider, and with abilities to repair the breaches and to redress the grievances of all such as come before them. And grant that all rulers may so govern, and subjects so obey, that they may always deserve thy heavenly grace, assistance, protection, and salvation; which I ask in thy name, and for the sake and righteousness of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Clergy.

O God, who of thy great goodness hast set apart an order of men on purpose to guide and govern us, to direct and assist us in matters of our eternal salvation; grant, that all those, who dedicate themselves to the service of thy altar, may be inwardly moved by thy holy spirit to take upon them that sacred ministration; that their consciences may testify to them, that by engaging in this holy calling, their chief design is to serve thee, to promote thy glory, and to edify thy people. For which end, I humbly pray that they may make thy word the chief subject of their studies; that they may thence instruct thy people committed to their charge, and silence gainsayers; that they may faithfully and diligently administer thy holy sacraments; that they may labour in season and out of season, by private and public admonitions and exhortations; that they may maintain peace and love among all christians, and frame themselves and their families according to the precepts of thy holy gospel. Grant also, that I may always reverence and respect them, because they have a peculiar relation to thee; that I may sincerely love them, because of the benefits I receive by their administrations; that I may readily and cheerfully provide for their maintenance, because the Lord hath ordained that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel, and that he that is taught in the word ought to communicate to him that teaches in all good things: that I may never rob them of their just rights, by the least encroachment upon them; that I may earnestly pray for them because thy divine assistance is so necessary to crown their labours with success. And, above all, make me careful to obey those who have the rule over me; because they watch for my soul, as they that must give an account: that so, by a faithful discharge of my

duty to my spiritual superiors, I may continue a sound member of thy church here upon earth, and may live for ever in the society of the church triumphant in heaven, singing praises and hallelujahs to the blessed and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Religious Societies.

O Lord almighty, faithful and true, who by thy holy prophet hast told us, that from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, thy name shall be great among the gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto thy name, and a pure offering; for thy name shall be great among the heathen; bless and prosper, I beseech thee, the endeavours of the societies established among us for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen and others: take thou from them, to whom the glad tidings of salvation shall be preached, all ignorance, hardness of heart and contempt of thy word; so that thy word being sown in good and honest hearts it may bring forth fruit abundantly to thy honour, and the salvation of their souls: and grant, that all who have heard and received it may live according to its doctrine and precepts, and by holiness of life, and zeal for thy glory, may become eminent examples to all about them. Bless all religious and other societies among us, for Christian conference, and works of charity; for the promoting of christian knowledge and practice among the poor and ignorant: and for putting the laws in execution against the vicious and profane. O Lord, increase the number of these societies, and enable them all to choose the best and most inoffensive means for accomplishing their several ends, and to prosecute them diligently, with a zeal directed by wisdom and prudence; so that, being free from all worldly interests, they may stedfastly pursue the advancement of thy glory, and the good of mankind. And grant, O God, that no good thou shalt vouchsafe to bring about by their poor endeavours, may tempt them to think highly of themselves, but modestly and humbly. Remove all unreasonable prejudices against their designs; shed forth thy love abroad in their hearts, that they may cheerfully embrace all opportunities of doing good to the souls and bodies of men, and not to be discouraged at any difficulties or oppositions they may meet with. O God, hear their prayers for themselves and others; defend them from the rage of Satan, and from the malice of evil men; perfect holiness more and more in their hearts; unite them finally to one another in thy truth, and in the bond of love: and make them zealous of all good works, according to the command and example of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good; for whose sake I beseech thee to hear me.—*Amen.*

PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS

SUITED TO THE

TWELVE ARTICLES OF THE CREED.

A Prayer to One God and Three Persons.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto all thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine Majesty to worship the Unity; I beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep me stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend me from all adversities; who livest and reigneth one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for the Birth of Christ.

IT is very meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God; because thou didst give Jesus Christ thine only Son to be born as at this time for me; who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man of the substance of the virgin Mary his mother, and that without spot of sin, to make me clean from sin: therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Benefits of Christ's Death.

I Beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into my heart, that as I have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel; so by his cross and passion I may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for the Resurrection.

ALMIGHTY God, who through thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto me the gate of everlasting life; I humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace, guiding and assisting me, thou dost put into my mind good desires, so by thy continual help I may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for the Ascension.

IT is very meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God; through thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who after his most glorious resurrection manifestly appeared to his apostles, and in their sight ascended up into heaven, to prepare a place for me; that where he is thither I might also ascend, and reign with him in glory: therefore with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Preparation for Judgment.

ALMIGHTY God, give me grace, that I may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon me the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit the world in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, I may rise to the life immortal, through him, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

IT is very meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, according to whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the apostles to teach them, and to lead them into all truth; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness, with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations; whereby the world hath been brought out of darkness and error into clear light and true knowledge of thee and of thy son Jesus Christ: therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Preservation of the Church.

O Lord, I beseech thee to keep thy church and houshold continually in thy true religion, that they who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than I to pray, and art wont to give more than either I desire or deserve; pour down upon me the abundance of thy mercy, forgiving me those things whereof my conscience is afraid, and giving me those good things which I am not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Profession of our Faith in the Resurrection.

I Believe that by the virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all the dead shall rise, bad as well as good; for death is swallowed up in victory. I believe, that, by the almighty power of Jesus Christ, all shall rise with the same bodies they had on earth; that their scattered dust shall be gathered into the same form again; that my soul shall be reunited to my body; that I shall be judged both in body and soul for the sins committed by both; that the bodies of the wicked shall be fitted for torments, and the bodies of the saints changed in quality, and made glorified bodies, immortal and incorruptible, fitted for heaven and eternally to love and enjoy God, for which glorious vouchsafement I do most humbly pray and will always pray and love my Creator and Redeemer, to whom with the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Life Everlasting.

GRANT, O Lord, that as I am baptized into the death of thy blessed Son, so by continually mortifying my corrupt affections, I may be buried with him: and that through the gate and the grave of death I may pass to a joyful resurrection, for his merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for me, thy son Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

A SHORT PARAPHRASE OR EXPLICATION.

OF THE

LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father which art in Heaven.

THIS is a solemn invocation on God, as the maker and governor of the world, and as the Father of all christians in Christ Jesus; in whose name alone it is, that I say, Father, and hope acceptance of this prayer. And I say *our Father*, and not *my* Father, because I believe God to be a common Father, whom all may resort unto, and also that I may declare my communion with, and good will to all my brethren of the same houshold of faith. And I add *which art in heaven*, because the throne of his power and glory is in heaven. Hence we learn, that God is the fountain of all goodness, and is able and willing to support us; that we ought to pray for others, as well as ourselves; and to join together in common prayer for common wants; and that, whenever we present our petitions to him, we ought to do it with the most serious consideration, the profoundest humility, and the utmost devotion and reverence we are capable of. There is one thing further to be taken notice of upon this head; that the expression, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, wherewith our Lord teaches us to *begin* this Prayer, is a *Preface* both to the *whole* Prayer, and to *every* Petition *in particular*.

Hallowed be thy Name.

THE name of God is here attended and applied not only to God himself, his titles and attributes, but to his word and ordinances, and to places, times, persons, and things separated from common use, and set apart for the honour and service of his name; that all and every one of them may be treated after a *holy* manner, by having such esteem and regard paid to them as is due to each of them respectively. And hence we learn, that the glory of God should be our chief aim, and the governing end of all our actions; that his name ought to be adored and magnified by us, and all the world; and that we should endeavour to promote the honour of it, by an exemplary behaviour in all other instances of piety and holiness.

Thy Kingdom come.

HERE we pray for the *coming* of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; a kingdom of a spiritual nature; founded in direct opposition to the kingdom of Satan, and for the destruction of sin and death; having its beginning in grace here, and its completion in eternal glory hereafter. Therefore in this petition we pray, that God

would bring all those, who are yet in a state of darkness, into the pale of Christ's church; and that his grace would so rule in the hearts of all christians, that they may be fit to be translated to that kingdom which is to be the portion of the saints in the world to come; and this as soon as God pleases. By which we are taught that it is our duty to beware of hindering the propagation of the gospel, or of endangering our own salvation, by giving any just occasion of offence; to subdue every rebellious lust, and to be obedient, even in our hearts and thoughts, to the spiritual laws of his kingdom; having no other ambition but to reign with Christ in his eternal glory.

Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.

In this petition we request, that all rational creatures, being filled with the knowledge of God's will, and proposing that will as the rule of their actions, and the doing it as the great business of their short time here on earth, may live under a sense of his over-ruling providence, and quietly submit to all, even the afflicting dispensations thereof; and may yield such an obedience to the laws given them to live by here, as the inhabitants of heaven do to the government under which they live, in the presence of God. And we must so far conform to the pattern, as to perform the commands of God, universally without exception; readily, without delay; cheerfully, without uneasiness; constantly, without intermission; and sincerely, without hypocrisy. And then, if our obedience can only bear such a proportion to our present state and condition, as the obedience of angels doth to theirs, we need not doubt our being made equal to them hereafter, in perfection both of obedience and happiness.

Give us this Day our daily Bread.

In this petition we pray, that God, upon whom all creatures depend for their subsistence, will be graciously pleased to give to us his children, day by day, all things necessary for our bodily sustenance, and sufficient also for the support of that condition of life, wherein his providence hath placed us; and therewith his blessing also in the use and enjoyment of them. And it teaches us to account that bread only to be our own, and the gift of God, which is procured by our honest labour and industry, or comes to us by some direct and lawful means; and to rest satisfied and contented with that portion, whatever it be, which is dispensed to us in one or other of those ways; and likewise to provide, but not to be solicitous, for futurity; and with prayer for what we want, and thankfulness for what we have, entirely depend upon our heavenly Father for so much of this world's good, as he knows to be best for us, in order to that life to come which we ought to be chiefly intent upon in this our mortal state.

Forgive us our Trespasses, as we forgive them that Trespass against us.

IN this petition, by trespasses against God are meant all sins, of what kind or degree soever; which being the great debts we owe to his vindictive justice, they are said to be forgiven, when the punishment of them is remitted by his mercy. And by trespasses against us are meant the injuries, either by word or deed, done to us by any of our fellow creatures; which, if they be *small* and inconsiderable, may be said to be forgiven, when they are passed over, either without notice taken of them, or, however, upon the acknowledgment of the offender. But if they be *great* wrongs, for which further satisfaction in reason ought to be made, then the forgiveness of them consists in forbearing personal revenge, and having recourse only to public justice for recompence, if it cannot otherwise be obtained. Yet this is not a full discharge of the duty of christian forgiveness, unless we are also ready, as occasion offers, to perform all offices of humanity to those that have injured us, and do unfeignedly pray for their repentance and salvation. Which petition thus explained, teaches that we are all, in a higher or lower degree, sinners against God; and that it is our duty, with undissembled confession of our sins, earnestly to implore his fatherly compassion in the forgiveness of them, for Christ's sake. But it is a very dangerous error to suppose, that if we confess our sins continually to God, and return again to the practice of them, we shall be absolved in course: for all such confessions are but mockeries of religion. Without real amendment and reformation of manners, there is no such thing as forgiveness of sin. And we further learn, that as charity in forgiving is an acceptable qualification of a penitent's prayer for pardon, and will render it available in the sight of God; so it is a condition of such indispensable, because equitable, obligation, that without it God will not forgive us.

And lead us not in Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

IN this petition we are taught, that although God doth never tempt any man to do evil, yet he is sometimes pleased by very severe trials, to make proof of the faith and constancy of his servants; and that we are moreover in daily danger from our own corrupt nature, and from the seducements of the world and the devil, of being led into such temptations as would be too hard for us, and overwhelm us in the sad evils of guilt and misery, if by our tempting of God, we should provoke him to withdraw his grace, and leave us to ourselves. Therefore we here pray, that God will be pleased either wholly to keep us from falling into any strange temptation to daily sin, or, if he sees fit to permit this, that he will not forsake us, but give strength sufficient for the combat, and safely lead us through this state of warfare and probation, to that state where we shall be free from all evil, and all temptation to it.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.

THIS is no petition, but a praising and glorifying of God; that we may hence learn not only to pray for what we want, but return him love and praise and adoration for what we receive; and that the end of all may be his glory. And therefore, as we began this prayer with *hallowed be thy Name*; so, when we have begged of God all necessaries for our souls and bodies, we then conclude with this form of praise, as it is fit we should in all our prayers.

For thine is the Kingdom, that is, thine is the sovereignty and dominion over all the world; and therefore thou hast an infinite right to dispose of all things:

Thine is the Power, that is, thou art omnipotent or able to do all things; and therefore thou art most able to grant what we humbly pray for:

Thine is the Glory, that is, to thee we give honour, praise, and adoration in these and all our devotions: and if thou, O God, will answer our petitions, and grant what we request, to thee shall be returned the praise and glory for all ages. This doxology therefore is not barely a conclusion of the whole, but also a ground or reason of every part, and a foundation for every portion in particular.

Amen.

By *Amen* (or *so be it*) we declare our firm belief that God can grant what we pray for, and our earnest hope and fervent desire that he will do it for the sake of him, in whom *all the promises are yea and Amen*, even the Lord Jesus.

PIOUS EJACULATIONS.

For Pardon of Sins.

I Will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

For I acknowledge my faults; and my sin is ever before me.
Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

For Graces and Advancement in a Christian Life.

LORD, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

Hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Make thou thy servant to delight in that which is good.

Grant that all carnal affections may die in me, and that all things belonging to the spirit may live and grow in me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

O God of peace, sanctify me wholly, that my whole spirit, soul and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For the Light of God's Countenance or Mercy.

OUT of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.

O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint.

Lord, why abhorrest thou my soul, and hidest thy face from me? O hide not thy face from me, nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?

Show thy servant the light of thy countenance.

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; and save me for thy mercies sake.

Comfort the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, from this time forth for evermore. *Amen.*

For Deliverance in Time of Trouble.

I AM brought into so much trouble and misery, that I go mourning all the day long.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am in trouble, and mine eyes are consumed for very heaviness; yea my soul and my body.

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper.

Deliver me from the hands of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

Forsake me not, O Lord, my God; but haste thee to help me, O Lord, God of my salvation.

Acts of Adoration and Thanksgiving.

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.

Thy righteousnes, O God, is very high: great things, O Lord, are they that thou hast done: O God, who is like unto thee?

Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength; so will we sing and praise thy power.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, thanksgiving and praise, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. *Amen.*

PRAYERS TO BE USED BY SICK PERSONS.

A Prayer in Sickness.

O God, whose never failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; behold me thy poor servant, upon whom thou hast been pleased to lay thine afflicting hand: sanctify, I beseech thee, this thy fatherly correction to me; and grant that I may receive it with all the patience and submission becoming a child of God, neither murmuring nor repining under any dispensations of thy providence; but looking on all my afflictions as the means to wean me from the world, to bring me nearer to thyself, and to purge away all that dross and defilement which my soul has contracted in this sinful world. O merciful Father, let not my sins provoke thee to turn away thy face from me, while I seek unto thee in this time of my trouble; but for the merits and intercession of thy beloved Son, pardon all my sins, and say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Give me strength, resolution and patience to bear all my pain, weaknesses and infirmities; strengthen my faith, enlarge my hopes, increase my charity, and perfect my repentance, that I may be delivered from the fear of death. Make thou my bed in my sickness, and lay not more upon me than thou wilt enable me to bear; give a blessing to the means that shall be used for my recovery; and, if it be thy good pleasure, restore me to my former health, that I may lead the rest of my life, in thy fear and to thy glory. But if thou hast determined that this sickness shall be unto death; grant, O merciful Father, that the more the outward man decayeth, so much the more I may find the inner man strengthened and renewed by thy holy spirit; and give me grace so to take this thy visitation, that after this painful life is ended, I may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

* The reader who would understand how to support himself under, and improve such sickness, as the Lord shall please to visit him with, is referred to Sunday 7. Sect. vi. and Sunday 17.

A Prayer on sending for the Physician.

ALMIGHTY God, forasmuch as thou hast ordained the physician for the benefit of those who languish under any bodily distemper, I have resolved to try his skill, in order to the same; yet my chief hope is in thee. O be thou my help; for, without thee, vain is the help of man and all his skill. Therefore, I beseech thee, direct thy servant to what may be proper for me, and let thy blessing accompany his prescriptions, and give success thereto. For though the most efficacious methods of cure are nothing of themselves, yet if thou speakest the word, thy servant shall be healed: it is thou that art the great physician, who alone can effectually remove all my maladies; and all other helps are but instruments in thy hands, that work according to thy good pleasure; therefore be thou with me, to bless and prosper them, to thine own glory, and to the welfare of me thine unworthy servant, who here most humbly sues to thee for pity, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.—*Amen.*

A Prayer to be used on taking Physic.

GIVE thy blessing, O Lord, to the means now used for my recovery; for without thee all our endeavours are but in vain: and if it be thy blessed will, make them so effectual for that end, that I may live to promote thy glory, and to make a better preparation for the coming of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used on want of Sleep.

ALMIGHTY God, I seek sleep, to ease my pains, and to recruit my spirits, but find it not; consider my weariness, which calls aloud for rest, and my weakness, which greatly needs refreshment; and let my wearied eyes at length lay hold thereof. O grant, that while thou keepest me awake, I may be able to commune with my own heart, and search out my spirit; and let the consideration of thy tender mercies be my comfort, till thy goodness sees fit to give sleep to my eyes, and refreshment to my sorrows, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer to be used when labouring under bodily Pain.

ALMIGHTY God, who art a present help in time of trouble; I most earnestly beseech thee, if it be thy blessed will, to ease my pain, and comfort me in this time of my affliction. I acknowledge the justice of thy dealings towards me, and that I have deserved much greater pains than I now endure; therefore grant me patience, that with a meek and quiet submission to thy will, I may

wait till thou seest fit to deliver me from my distress. And, whatever evils and sorrows I may feel in my body, let me still love thee, and believe thee to be a kind and merciful Father, even while thou art smiting and correcting me for my transgressions. To which end, O Lord, be pleased, in thy great mercy, to strengthen and support me, and lay no more upon me than thou wilt enable me to bear; and sanctify this affliction to me, that it may produce the fruits of a true and lively faith, and sincere repentance of all my sins; all which I beg at the throne of thy mercy, through the merits and in the name of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a sick Child.

ALMIGHTY God and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death; I fly unto thee for succour in behalf of this child here lying under thy hand in great weakness of body. Look graciously upon it, O Lord; ease it, I humbly beseech thee of its pains, and pity it in extremity. I know O Lord, that if thou wilt, thou canst raise it up, and grant it a longer continuance in this life. O raise it up again (if it may please thee) to grow in years and stature, in wisdom and thy fear, and thereby to comfort its parents, and to glorify thee. I believe, O God, that thou knowest what is best for it and me, and wilt do what is best for both; therefore I humbly resign its life into thy hands, beseeching thee to have mercy on us. But whether it lives or dies, let it be thine; and either preserve it to be thy faithful servant here on earth, or take it to the blessed of thy children in heaven. Grant this for thy mercies sake, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer against the Fear of Death.

MOST gracious God, since I am hastening on to the end of my life, let all my sins be done away by thy mercy, and my faith and repentance through the merits of Christ. Take from me all guilt; remove all fear, and give me patience during the rest of my life, that I may always stand ready to give a good account of my life unto thee; and that I may fight the good fight of faith with perseverance, and finish my course with joy. Since the sentence of death is passed upon me, strip my soul of all fleshly affections, before it leaves my body; and dispose it to be of like mind and disposition with the holy angels and beatified spirits, neither let me forget, that as this is like to be the last trial, which thou wilt afford me, of renouncing my own will and resigning myself to thine, and of showing forth all holy obedience, and humble confidence in thee: make me therefore watch for all opportunities of exercising the same with diligence, as my last labour for immortality, and for securing thy everlasting mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who died for me and all mankind. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Assistance at the Hour of Death.

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, my only help in time of need; look graciously upon me, O Lord, and the more the outward man decayeth, strengthen me I beseech thee, so much the more continually with thy grace and holy spirit in the inner man. Give me unfeigned repentance for all the errors of my life past, and stedfast faith in thy Son Jesus, that my sins may be done away by thy mercy, and my pardon sealed in heaven, before I go hence and be no more seen. I know, O Lord, that there is no work impossible with thee, and that, if thou wilt, thou canst even yet raise me up, and grant me a long continuance in this life. Yet, forasmuch as in all appearance the time of my dissolution draweth near, so fit and prepare me, I beseech thee, against the hour of death, that after my departure hence in peace, and in thy favour, my soul may be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving after Recovery from Sickness.

ALMIGHTY God, the creator and preserver of all mankind, I, thy unworthy servant, whom thou hast raised from a dangerous sickness, do now present myself before thee in a thankful sense of thy great mercy and goodness towards me. Thou hast chastened and corrected me, but thou hast not given me over unto death.—Blessed be thy holy name for supporting me under the pain and anguish of a sick bed, and for restoring me in thy good time to the blessings of strength and health [*and, in case you have been light-headed, add,* and to the perfect use of my reason and understanding.] The pains and weaknesses, wherewith thou hast visited me, I know, O Lord, were intended for the improvement of my soul, and not for the punishment of my body; to convince me of the frailty of my nature, and of the uncertainty of my abode here; to bring me to a sense of the evil of my doings, and to a serious consideration of my future state. I am heartily grieved at the sins and vanities of my former life, and do hereby solemnly renounce them all; and, in a just sense of my own weakness and frailty, I earnestly implore the assistance of thy holy spirit, to subdue my inordinate desires, and to keep me stedfast in every promise and resolution that I made before thee in the day of my distress. And let thy late gracious warning of mortality teach me the uncertainty of my continuance here upon earth, and oblige me to live in a daily preparation to die, that, having profited by thy fatherly correction, and employing the remainder of my life to thy glory and the salvation of my own soul, I may be found worthy to enter into the joy of my Lord; to whom, with thee, and the blessed Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, glory, power, and dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

PACIFIC COAST BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL UNION
No.